Volume 86 No. 3 June 2021 £4.95

www.chess.co.uk

# Chess

## IT'S NEPO!

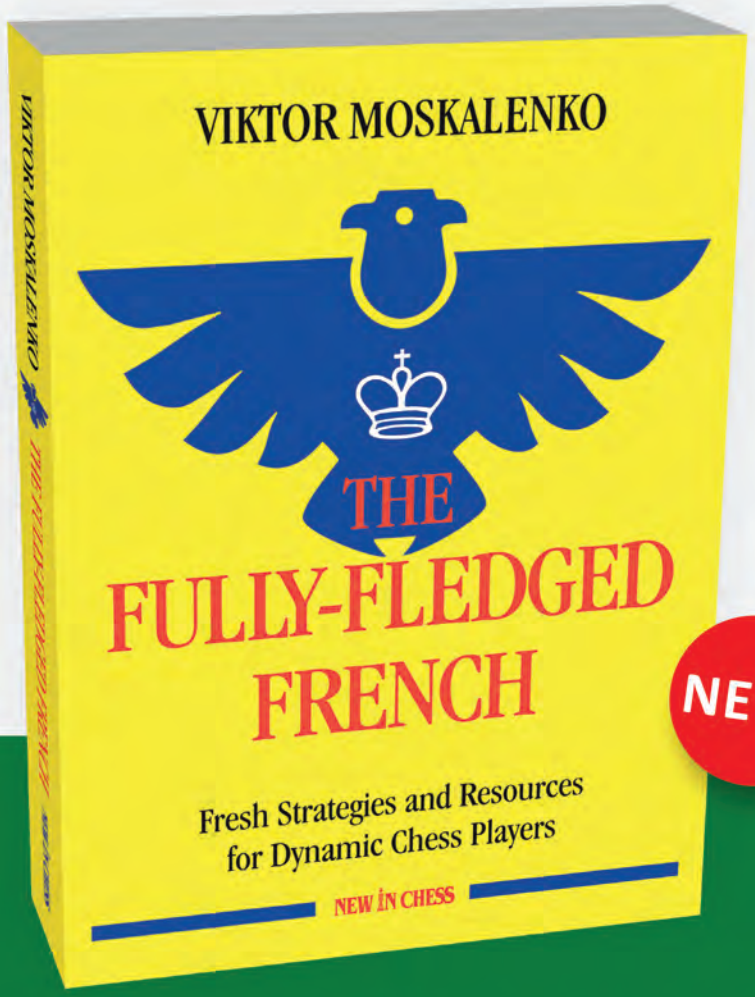
**Magnus Carlsen will face his childhood nemesis Ian Nepomniachtchi for the World Chess Championship this November in Dubai after the Russian no.1 won the Candidates with a round to spare**

ISSN 0964-6221

- Rest in Peace - Yury Lapshun and Jon Jacobs on Steinitz and Lasker, and where they're buried
- Arise Nepo! - Daniel King praises the new challenger in his latest *How Good is Your Chess?*
- Birth of a Union - Bob Jones on the late arrival of the WECU and the mystery of Harry Trevenen

VISIT…

# Practical, accessible, original, entertaining and inspiring




NEW!

Viktor Moskalenko's bestselling books *The Flexible French* (2008) and *The Even More Flexible French* (2015) were hailed by reviewers from all over the world as eye-opening, full of new ideas, easy to read, sparkling, and inspirational.

Time has not stood still, and the popular French Defence has seen a lot of new developments. Moskalenko has kept playing and researching his beloved chess opening and decided to write a new book with countless improvements, alternatives, new ideas and fresh weapons that will delight and surprise the reader.

As always, Moskalenko's analysis is high-level, yet his touch is light and fresh. In his own inimitable style, he whets the reader's appetite and shares his love for the French with gusto. The wealth of original and dynamic options in every main line proves that the French continues to be a highly intriguing defence that is very much alive.

This is a typical Moskalenko book: practical, accessible, original, entertaining and inspiring!

paperback | 368 pages | £26.95 | available at the London Chess Centre - www.chess.co.uk/shop

# Chess

Founding Editor: B.H. Wood, OBE. M.Sc †
Executive Editor: Malcolm Pein
Editors: Richard Palliser, Matt Read
Associate Editor: John Saunders
Subscriptions Manager: Paul Harrington

Chess Magazine (ISSN 0964-6221) is published by:
Chess & Bridge Ltd, 44 Baker St, London, W1U 7RT
Tel: 020 7486 7015
Email: info@chess.co.uk, Website: www.chess.co.uk

Twitter: @CHESS_Magazine
Twitter: @TelegraphChess - Malcolm Pein
Twitter: @chessandbridge

**Subscription Rates:**

*United Kingdom*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 year (12 issues) | £50 |
| 2 year (24 issues) | £90 |
| 3 year (36 issues) | £125 |

*Europe*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 year (12 issues) | £60 |
| 2 year (24 issues) | £115 |
| 3 year (36 issues) | £165 |

*Rest of World (Airmail)*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 year (12 issues) | £75 |
| 2 year (24 issues) | £145 |
| 3 year (36 issues) | £210 |

Distributed by:
LMPI (North America)
8155 Larrey Street, Montreal (Quebec),
H1J 2L5, Canada - Tel: 514 355-5610

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editors. Contributions to the magazine will be published at the Editors' discretion and may be shortened if space is limited.

No parts of this publication may be reproduced without the prior express permission of the publishers.

**All rights reserved. © 2021**

**FRONT COVER:**
Cover Design: Matt Read
Cover image: Lennart Ootes/FIDE

**US & Canadian Readers – You can contact us via our American branch – Chess4Less based in West Palm Beach, FL. Call toll-free on 1-877 89CHESS (24377). You can even order Subscriber Special Offers online via www.chess4less.com**

**Printed in the UK by The Magazine Printing Company using only paper from FSC/PEFC suppliers www.magprint.co.uk**

# Contents

**Editorial** ..... 4
Malcolm Pein on the latest developments in the game

**Russian Delight** ..... 8
The home fans had much to cheer when the Candidates resumed

**How Good is Your Chess?** ..... 22
Daniel King pays tribute to man of the hour, Ian Nepomniachtchi

**60 Seconds with...Rosie Irwin** ..... 25
We meet one of the authors of *The Queen's Gambit - Accepted!*

**Find the Winning Moves** ..... 26
Can you do as well as the players in the 4NCL Online League?

**Rest in Peace** ..... 30
Yury Lapshun and Jon Jacobs look at two famous chess graves

**The Passionate Chess Scribe** ..... 36
Popular writer David LeMoir has released an anthology

**Building a Study** ..... 38
The technical aspect is quite important, as Amatzia Avni explains

**Keeping Up With...Keymer** ..... 40
Like Praggnanandhaa, Vincent Keymer is very much a rising force

**Birth of a Union** ..... 42
Bob Jones on the birth of the WECU and the mystery of Trevenen

**Never Mind the Grandmasters...** ..... 44
Carl Portman on objectivity and the Colle Opening

**Chess in the Park Takes Off** ..... 46
Taking your chess club to the park is a good plan, as Tim Wall shows

**Recognition - The 2021 ECF Awards** ..... 48
Stephen Greep explains all about the awards' new look

**Overseas News** ..... 49
Success for the world champion and a beautiful queen sacrifice

**Home News** ..... 52
Terry Chapman triumphed online, while a little OTB chess has begun

**Solutions** ..... 53
The full answers to *Find the Winning Moves*

**This Month's New Releases** ..... 54
Andrey Terekhov on Smyslov impresses, as does the Exchange French

**Saunders on Chess** ..... 58
John on Lastrounditis, the phenomenon of last round chess

Photo credits: Ian Barker (p.47), Jurriaan Hoefsmit (p.49), Jon Jacobs (pp. 31, 32 top, 35), Lennart Ootes/FIDE (pp. 1, 9-17, 19-20), Tim Wall (p.46), Wikimedia/Stefan64 (p.40).

# Chess Editorial

By Executive Editor, IM Malcolm Pein @TelegraphChess

## Nepo Finds Himself

So now we know. After the longest Candidates tournament in history, lasting the best part of 14 months, Ian Nepomniachtchi prevailed. The 30-year-old Muscovite had plenty of time to recover from his only defeat of the event that concluded the first 'sitting' at Yekaterinburg when his French Defence was clobbered by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. The Frenchman assumed the lead on tiebreak before play resumed 13 months later, but was felled by some of the deepest opening preparation I've ever seen from Fabiano Caruana that created enormous complexity in MVL's beloved Sicilian Najdorf. The Poison Pawn Variation will never be the same again, and that game, analysed in depth inside, brought home why classical chess must always remain the pinnacle of our game.

There is a full report inside, and a glance at the crosstable shows that Nepo's ruthlessness against the two lowest-rated players in the field was a key contributor to his success. Wang Hao and Kirill Alekseenko, while absolutely outstanding players, are not of the quality one is used to seeing in the Candidates of old. Of course, that was a result of changes to the regulations to make the process more democratic in the case of Wang Hao, who qualified via the Isle of Man Grand Swiss. Alekseenko's inclusion was more controversial.

A word on Wang Hao: he played his part as this wild encounter shows and his main contribution was probably defeating Ding Liren, thereby putting his compatriot 'on tilt' in the first half. Wang collapsed towards the end, losing bad games to Nepo and then to MVL in the last round after which, in an emotional interview, he announced his retirement following what was likely the high water mark of his career. It would be a shame if we were deprived of more games like this.

*Wang Hao announced his retirement from professional chess at the end of the Candidates.*

**Wang Hao-A.Grischuk**
Yekaterinburg Candidates 2020
*French Defence*

**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘fd7 5 ♘ce2 c5 6 c3 ♘c6 7 f4 ♗e7 8 ♘f3 f6 9 ♗e3 0-0 10 g3 ♕b6 11 ♕d2 cxd4**

Grischuk went into the tank, a very deep tank, ahead of this. He summed up his feelings afterwards: "The thing is, the white set-up is very ambitious, and if he manages to finish his development he will be clearly better because he has a huge centre. So Black needs to play very energetically."

**12 ♘fxd4**

This was not what Grischuk had been focusing on in that 72 minutes! He was immersed in the complexities of 12 ♘exd4 fxe5 13 ♘xe6 d4 14 ♘xf8 dxe3 15 ♗c4+ ♔xf8 (15...♔h8! is good for Black) 16 ♕d5 ♔e8 17 ♕g8+ ♘f8 18 0-0-0!.

**12...♘c5 13 exf6 ♗xf6**

13...♖xf6 14 ♘b3 ♘e4 15 ♕d3 ♘c5 16 ♕d2 would be a possible draw by repetition, or White might try 16 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 17 ♘xc5 ♕xc5 18 0-0-0 with an edge. It would be easy to overlook that Black threatens ...♕xb2!

**14 ♘b3 ♘e4 15 ♕d3**

15 ♗xb6 ♘xd2 16 ♗c5 ♘xf1 17 ♗xf8 ♘e3 emerges unscathed, and if 18 ♔f2 ♘g4+ 19 ♔f3 e5! 20 ♗a3 e4+ 21 ♔g2 ♘e3+ 22 ♔f2 ♘g4+ when White might be best served by repeating, rather than allowing a black pawn to e3.

**15...♕c7 16 ♗g2 ♘d6 17 ♗f2 ♘c4 18 ♕c2**

White is better now as he has managed to suppress Black's counterplay while retaining a superior structure.

**18...♘e7 19 0-0 e5!**

After 19...♗d7 20 ♖fe1 Black's weakness on e6 is a long-term problem.

**20 fxe5 ♗f5**

**21 exf6**

Entirely optional, but great fun. White keeps his edge after 21 ♕d1 ♗xe5 22 ♘ed4.

**21...♗xc2 22 fxe7 ♖fe8 23 ♘f4**

23 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 24 ♘c5 was also very unclear, and if 24...♘e5 25 ♘f4 ♖xe7 26 ♗xb7.

**23...♘b6 24 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 25 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 26 ♘d4 ♕d7! 27 c4 ♗g6**

27...♗d3 28 ♖fd1 ♗g6 29 ♘e6 ♖xe7 was at least as good.

**28 ♘e6 ♖xe7 29 ♖ae1 ♗f7?**

29...♗f5! 30 ♘c5 ♕c7 31 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 32 ♘xb7 ♖c8 is good for Black. In all positions with queen versus pieces, the pieces need secure outposts; here the knight is unstable and vulnerable.

**30 ♘xg7!**

**30...♗xd5**

Now White equalises, indeed Black has to play accurately with very little time. Instead, 30...♖xe1 31 ♗xe1 ♔xg7 32 ♖xf7+ ♕xf7 33 ♗xf7 ♔xf7 34 ♔f2 ♔e6 35 ♔e3 ♔f5 36 ♗c3 ♖d8 37 h3 ♖d1 was a definite chance for a win.

*All hail the victor - and new world championship challenger! Ian Nepomniachtchi would love to be crowned with another laurel wreath in Dubai, but I fancy the champ will prove too strong.*

**31 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 32 ♘f5 ♕f8 33 ♗d4+ ♔g8 34 cxd5 h5! 35 d6 ♔h7 36 ♘e7 ♕e8!**

The only move.

**37 ♖f6 ♖d8 38 ♗c3**

White intends ♘f5 now that ...♕e1+ is ruled out, so Grischuk bales.

**38...♖xd6 39 ♖xd6 ♕xe7 40 ♖d4 ♔g6 41 a3 ♕e3+ ½-½**

Reflecting on his long think Grischuk said: for me, as it made my opponent sacrifice a queen probably not very correctly; but, on the other hand, it made me unable to really think after the unexpected 12 ♘fxd4."

Ultimately it was Nepo's fighting victory over Anish Giri, that came after he was confronted by an opening ambush in the very first round, which proved decisive as the final rounds approached. Giri did his very best to catch up, but even catching up would not have been enough. As he had lost the individual game which was the first tiebreak, Giri needed to surpass Nepo's score, not just equal it. Nepo could even afford the luxury of collapsing in the last round against a rejuvenated Ding Liren.

*The Class of 1990 - from the 2002 World Under-12 Championships. (from right-left): Ian Nepomniachtchi, Magnus Carlsen, David Howell, Dmitri Andreikin, Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, Wei Chenpeng. Also participating, but not pictured were MVL, Le Quang Liem and Ivan Saric.*

Attention turns to Magnus Carlsen's fifth world will title match, his fourth defence against a fourth opponent. Nepo will be a completely different challenge. Perhaps the most important thing to consider is that he is not afraid of Carlsen which shines through when they play. For one thing, Nepo is the only leading player with a plus score against Carlsen in classical chess and he also inherited a plus score against a young Carlsen. They were both born in the 'golden year' of 1990 which also includes David Howell. Nepo defeated Carlsen in the world under-12 championships back in 2002.

The match will take place in Dubai, where it had been scheduled for last year, and will be sited alongside the Dubai World Expo which should be a pretty spectacular setting. Travel restrictions permitting, I'm very tempted to go.

I really wonder if the challenger has the requisite solidity to win a world title match. As Carlsen pithily remarked, it's not just your peaks that are important, it's also your troughs. At the very least this promises to be an interesting match and Carlsen won't be able to make the kind of decision he made against Caruana in the final game back in 2018, when he offered a draw in an advantageous position as he judged his chances in speed chess to be even greater than those in the final position of game 12. Nepo is a very accomplished player at both rapid and blitz, and will give Carlsen a really tough battle if it comes to a tiebreak.

In a very positive move, FIDE have extended the match from 12 to 14 games, so it will be the first to 7½ points. In an interview with Norwegian newspaper *VG*, Carlsen said he thinks the extension will lead to more risk-taking and that it is: "Wonderful to avoid two rest days, because it's almost more nerve-wracking to walk around and take trips on the days off".

Game one is on 26th November with game 14 scheduled for 14th December and tie-breaks, if required, the following day. The pattern is three games and a rest day, followed by two games and a rest day.

My money is on Carlsen retaining his title. After a post-30th birthday blip, which looking back on it was just the champion not winning a few online tournaments in the main, plus one dreadful performance at Wijk aan Zee, he seems back to his dominant best, but we'll have to see what happens when he gets an outing at another over-the-board tournament. As yet, we don't know when that will be, but with Europe gradually getting its vaccination act together I expect we'll see a few more events emerging. As I write, the only major event that has been announced so far is Dortmund where Luke McShane will play.

Carlsen described himself as 100% motivated and commented recently: "I have

already thought a lot about it. I can't say what, but I will do things a bit differently than before. I have several ideas about what I can do better, but I can't disclose what that is until after the world championship." There are some rumours he may be making changes in his analytical team.

## Outdoor Festival is on! July 16th, 17th & 18th

I'm delighted to announce that Chess in Schools and Communities will be organising a three-day outdoor chess festival in London. This will climax with a mass participation event in Trafalgar Square, of which I understand that I have secured exclusive use on Sunday, 18th of July. If for any reason Trafalgar Square is not possible, the back-up venue is Potters Field Park on the banks of the River Thames by Tower Bridge.

It will be a fun day, open to everyone of all ages and chess levels, particularly complete beginners, for whom there will be free lessons. There won't be any formal tournaments. The theme of the festival will be *Alice Through The Looking Glass* and one of the activities in Trafalgar Square will be the construction of a giant board with 32 actors as human chess pieces in Alice costumes.

It is the 170th anniversary of the publication of Lewis Carroll's book in which Alice advances down the board to promote to a queen. The Mad Hatter has agreed to play, while Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum have also been in touch to say that they'd like to be involved provided that time does not stand still between now and then. I'm hoping that the Cheshire Cat will also get involved, but he has a habit of appearing and disappearing at random which has made it rather hard to make arrangements.

If everything goes to plan, we will have over 100 chess boards for people to play friendly games on, free grandmaster simuls, free lessons and the very unofficial World Giant Chess Championship, which will be a gruelling exercise, requiring physical stamina and chess skill with players making moves on the giant board and then running to hit the clock.

The plan is also to play some Internet games against other cities which will be relayed on a giant screen in Trafalgar Square. If you'd like to challenge the assembled players in London from your hometown, it must be a public gathering; we won't be taking on all-comers, but please get in touch and we'll see if we can arrange it.

*Dubai will finally get to host the delayed EXPO later this year and alongside that will be the Carlsen-Nepomniachtchi match. It will be interesting to see if it's on TV outside Norway and Russia.*

On Saturday, 17th of July, CSC will be running an outdoor rapidplay tournament for up to 150 players – the entry form will be available on the Chess in Schools website soon. There will be £2,000 in prizes and grandmaster participation. This will take place at Manchester Square Gardens, opposite the Wallace Collection Museum and very conveniently located a few hundred yards from the chess shop. As the garden has limited capacity, if you would like to play or attend, please register in advance.

On Friday the 16th of July the charity will be organising events for school children within our programme at the V&A Museum and also at another central London location.

The Trafalgar Square event represents an opportunity for us to bring chess to a wider audience and try and capitalise on *The Queens Gambit* effect. I do hope you'll be able to come. Please check the Chess in Schools website and chess.co.uk for more details.

## It's my website and I'll win if I want to

At the fifth attempt, Magnus finally won one of his own tournaments that comprise the $1.5m Meltwater Champions Chess Tour. The world champion pretty much dominated the entire proceedings to win the New in Chess Classic played on Chess24 which is part of the Play Magnus group. Carlsen cruised through the preliminaries, finishing top of the tree and went through to the last eight where he defeated Teimour Radjabov and Levon Aronian. This set up the dream final against Hikaru Nakamura who got past Shak Mamedyarov after an epic battle in which the Azeri tried a sacrificial line against the Nimzo-Indian three times, scoring two wins.

Shak was in great form as in this brilliancy, which involved a rare sighting of the Blumenfeld Countergambit. I wrote a book on

*Maxime Vachier-Lagrave has some experience of playing outdoor chess in a competitive setting, as we can see from when he took on Danny Rensch. Will you compete at the outdoor festival?*

the opening with IM Jan Przewoznik in 1991. The opening is well worth a try if you get the chance, but watch out for 5 e4!?, a sharp counter involving a pawn sacrifice.

*The champ was visibly delighted when he finally won a tournament in 2021, dominating the New in Chess Classic.*

**J.K.Duda-S.Mamedyarov**
New in Chess Classic 2021
*Blumenfeld Countergambit*

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 d5 b5 5 dxe6**

Just a sample line: 5 e4 ♘xe4 6 ♗d3 ♘f6 7 0-0 ♗e7 8 ♘c3 bxc4 9 ♗xc4 d6 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 ♖e1.

**5...fxe6 6 cxb5 d5 7 g3**

The traditional counter; White shores up the kingside. One great thing about the Blumenfeld is that countering with natural moves is insufficient: for example, in one of the earliest games White was crushed by a future world champion: 7 e3 ♗d6 8 ♘c3 0-0 9 ♗e2 ♗b7 10 b3 ♘bd7 11 ♗b2 ♕e7 12 0-0 ♖ad8 13 ♕c2 e5 14 ♖fe1 e4 15 ♘d2 ♘e5 16 ♘d1 ♘fg4 17 ♗xg4 ♘xg4 18 ♘f1 ♕g5 19 h3 ♘h6 20 ♔h1 ♘f5 21 ♘h2 d4 22 ♗c1 d3 23 ♕c4+ ♔h8 24 ♗b2 ♘g3+!...

...25 ♔g1 (if 25 fxg3 ♕xg3 26 ♘g4 ♕xe1#) 25...♗d5 26 ♕a4 ♘e2+ 27 ♔h1 ♖f7 28 ♕a6 h5 29 b6 ♘g3+ 30 ♔g1 axb6 31 ♕xb6 d2 32 ♖f1 ♘xf1 33 ♘xf1 ♗e6 34 ♔h1 ♗xh3 35 gxh3 ♖f3 36 ♘g3 h4 37 ♗f6 ♕xf6 38 ♘xe4 ♖xh3+ 0-1, Tarrasch-Alekhine, Bad Pistyan 1922.

**7...a6**

Another example: 7...♗d6 8 ♗g2 0-0 9 0-0 a6 10 bxa6 ♗xa6 11 ♖e1 ♘c6 12 ♘g5 ♕e8 (better is 12...♕d7 or 12...♖e8) 13 e4 d4 14 e5 ♘xe5 15 ♗xa8? (White missed the very strong 15 f4 ♘d3 16 ♖xe6 or 15 ♗f4 ♘fd7 16 ♗xe5 followed by 16...♗xe5 17 ♗xa8 or 16...♘xe5 17 f4) 15...♕xa8 16 ♗f4? ♘d3 17 ♗xd6 ♘xf2! (or just 17...♘xe1) 18 ♕f3 (18 ♔xf2 ♘e4+ 19 ♔g1 ♘xg5 also wins) 18...♘h3+ 19 ♔g2 ♗b7 20 ♘e4 ♗xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♘g5 22 ♕e2 ♘fxe4 0-1, Berndt-Richter, Berlin 1936.

**8 bxa6 ♘c6 9 ♗g2 ♗e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♘c3 ♗xa6 12 b3 h6**

Ruling out a possible ♘g5 followed by e2-e4, but 12...♕e8 was OK.

**13 ♗b2 ♕e8 14 ♖c1 ♕h5 15 ♖e1?!**

Weakening f2 is risky, but if 15 ♘a4 ♘e4 16 ♘d2? ♗xe2 and here 16 a3 ♗b5 17 ♘c3 ♘xc3 18 ♖xc3 d4 19 ♖c1 e5 looks fine for Black.

**15...♖ad8 16 ♘a4 ♘e4 17 ♗a3 ♘e5**

17...d4, defending c5 with the queen, was also well playable, but Shak was in the zone by now.

**18 ♗xc5 ♘g4 19 ♗xe7 ♖xf3**

**20 ♗h4?**

There are some very strange and rather hard to fathom complications after 20 h3 ♖xf2 21 ♕d4 ♖xg2+ 22 ♔xg2 ♘gf2. Here 23 ♖h1 ♗xe2 is clearly bad, although the computer gives one drawing line after 23 ♗h4 ♖d7 (if 23...♖f8 24 ♖c7) 24 ♘c5 ♖f7 25 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 26 ♔g1 ♘f2 27 ♔g2 ♘e4.

**20...♖xf2!**

Threatening ...♘e3 or if you like ...♖xg2+; ♔xg2 ♘e3+.

**21 ♗xe4**

White helps himself to a second piece and not 21 ♗xd8 ♕xh2#.

**21...♖xh2**

Dodging 21...dxe4 22 ♕xd8+.

**22 ♗f3**

The rook is still immune: 22 ♗xd8 ♕h3 or 22...♖h1+ 23 ♔g2 ♕h2+ 24 ♔f3 ♕f2+ 25 ♔xg4 h5+ 26 ♔g5 ♕xg3#.

**22...♖xh4 23 gxh4 ♕xh4 24 ♗xg4 ♕xg4+ 25 ♔h2 ♕h4+ 26 ♔g2**

Shak now crowns his attack with even more sacrifices in a brilliant finish.

**26...d4! 27 ♘c5 ♕g4+ 0-1**

28 ♔h2 ♖d5!! is the hidden point of 26...d4.

*Shakhriyar Mamedyarov bounced back to form and in some style at the New in Chess Classic, only narrowly being eliminated by Hikaru Nakamura in a gripping semi-final.*

# Russian Delight

## When the world's longest tournament finally resumed in Yekaterinburg, there was to be plenty for the home fans to cheer thanks to Ian Nepomniachtchi

Rarely can a clubhouse leader have had to wait as long as Maxime Vachier-Lagrave did for play to resume in the Candidates tournament. A year and 25 days after play was halted in Yekaterinburg as Russian airspace first closed for the pandemic, it resumed on April 19th, with the same eight players at the same venue.

While the out-of-form-of-late French no.1 and Ian Nepomniachtchi were a point clear on 4½/7, it was by no means impossible that one of the four players on 50% would come out of the pack and aim to join in the fight to be the next world championship challenger. Right at the start of round 8, Fabiano Caruana suggested that was very much his aim, as he came armed with a fiendish novelty for Vachier-Lagrave's beloved Najdorf.

**F.Caruana-M.Vachier-Lagrave**
Round 8
*Sicilian Najdorf*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗g5**

Caruana already demonstrates that he didn't elect to sit out the Meltwater Champions Tour for no reason, going straight for the sharpest and most critical test of the Najdorf.

**6...e6 7 f4 ♕b6**

The traditional move order. 7...h6 8 ♗h4 ♕b6 is the modern take on the famous Poisoned Pawn variation when play can very easily transpose after 9 ♕d2 ♕xb2 10 ♖b1 ♕a3 11 e5.

**8 ♕d2 ♕xb2 9 ♖b1 ♕a3 10 e5 h6 11 ♗h4 dxe5 12 fxe5 ♘fd7**

12...g5!? is another fascinating line which is considered to be '0.00', but no doubt Caruana, Kasimdzhanov et al had something in store here too for White.

**13 ♘e4 ♕xa2 14 ♖d1 ♕d5 15 ♕e3 ♕xe5 16 c3!?**

Already a surprise. The text has received a bit of correspondence testing, but this was only the second ever over-the-board encounter with it. Previously, the French no.1 had faced the main line, 16 ♗e2 ♗c5 17 ♗g3 ♕d5!? (17...♗xd4 18 ♖xd4 ♕a5+ 19 ♖d2 0-0 has also received plenty of testing) 18 c4 ♗xd4 19 ♖xd4 ♕a5+ 20 ♖d2 0-0 21 ♗d6 f5 22 ♗xf8 ♘xf8 23 ♘d6 ♘bd7, going on to triumph in both Najer-Vachier-Lagrave, Dortmund 2016, and Giri-Vachier-Lagrave, Paris (rapid) 2019.

**16...♗c5**

Black still pins. His king is caught in the centre after 16...♗e7!? 17 ♗xe7 ♔xe7, but we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that White has sacrificed three pawns.

**17 ♗g3 ♕d5 18 ♗c4!?**

A stunning new move and one which unsurprisingly caused Vachier-Lagrave on the next move to delve fully into the tank. On the excellent Chess24 commentary, the world champion no less told David Howell that his reaction to being hit by such a bomb would be "Horror. Pure horror."

White has also tried 18 ♗d6 ♗xd6 19 ♘b5, but after 19...♕xd1+! 20 ♔xd1 (Beveridge-Milde, correspondence 2013) 20...axb5!? 21 ♘xd6+ ♔e7 Black should be OK, with a fairly solid set-up and plenty of material for the queen.

**18...♕xc4 19 ♗d6 ♘f6!**

Vachier-Lagrave was condemned by some commentators for remaining true to his beloved Najdorf, but he evidently trusted in himself to navigate any complications when caught out – as he now demonstrates. The text sensibly returns the extra piece to force the pace and some simplification.

Instead, 19...♗xd6?? 20 ♘xd6+ was clearly not an option, and neither was 19...♘c6?? 20 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 21 ♘d6+. Likewise, 19...♗a7? 20 ♗b4 doesn't make much sense and 19...♗b6? 20 ♗b4 ♕xb4!? 21 cxb4 0-0 22 ♕g3! shouldn't give Black enough for the queen. As such, the critical test and the move which Team Caruana must have burnt the midnight oil over was 19...♗xd4!? 20 ♖xd4 ♕b3! (20...♕a2? 21 0-0 ♘c6 22 ♖d2 ♕b3 23 ♕g3 feels very dangerous for Black) when 21 ♕g3! (21 0-0? ♘c6 is rather slow in view of 22 ♖d2 ♕b6) 21...♕b1+ 22 ♔f2! ♕b2+ (22...♕xh1? 23 ♕xg7 ♖f8 24 ♗c5! wins) 23 ♔e3!? g5 would have been extremely unclear. White has sacrificed a bishop and three pawns, and has a king on e3, but Black is extremely weak on the dark squares, with his king especially vulnerable. The engines are quick to proclaim their beloved '0.00', with 24 ♗b4! ♘c6 25 ♖d2 f5! 26 ♘d6+ ♔d8! 27 ♘f7+ ♔e8 28 ♘d6+ ♔d8 one remarkable and far-from-forced route to a repetition.

**20 ♘xc5**

Forced, but now Vachier-Lagrave gets to discombobulate further, albeit at the cost of allowing White to line up a scary looking sacrifice or two.

**20...♘d5 21 ♕e5 ♖g8!**

Displaying nerves of steel and typically good calculation. Instead, 21...♕xc3+ 22 ♔f2 ♕b2+ 23 ♔g3! ♘f6 24 ♖hf1! would have left Black under the cosh.

**22 ♘dxe6!**

Still three pawns in arrears, White simply must keep going forwards.

**22...fxe6 23 ♘xe6 ♕xc3+**

Another good practical decision, not least

*A point behind Vachier-Lagrave on resumption, Fabiano Caruana demonstrated how badly he wanted to catch up with a novelty, 18 ♗c4.*

with Caruana still blitzing out the moves, although remarkably it seems that Black may be able to get away with 23...♘f6!?, and if 24 ♘g5+ ♗e6 25 ♕xe6+ ♕xe6+ 26 ♘xe6 ♔f7 27 ♘c7 ♖a7 28 0-0 when White has good play for a pawn, but a draw should be the most likely outcome.

**24 ♕xc3 ♘xc3 25 ♘c7+ ♔f7 26 ♖d3**

This is a position which Vachier-Lagrave really had to assess and make sure he wasn't losing on the spot in (the king has g6 and h7), back on move 19.

**26...♘e4?!**

Easy to criticise, but certainly very natural. It may well be the case, though, that objectively Black should prefer 26...♖a7!? 27 ♖xc3 ♔g6 28 0-0 (28 ♘d5 ♘c6 29 0-0 ♔h7 transposes, although here Black might also consider 29...a5!? 30 ♗c5 ♖a8 31 ♘b6 ♖a6) 28...♔h7! when White doesn't seem to have anything clever on the queenside, as shown by 29 ♘d5 ♘c6 30 ♗c5 b6! 31 ♗xb6 ♖d7, which should fizzle out to a pretty dead draw.

**27 0-0+ ♔g6 28 ♘xa8**

Regaining his material, but we are far from talking about a white win. For a start, Black has two connected passed pawns for the exchange and, no less importantly, White only has two, unpassed pawns remaining on the kingside.

**28...♘c6**

Black's knights will be an asset if play does come down to just the kingside, but he might also have aimed to maintain his light-squared bishop with 28...♖d8!? 29 ♖fd1 ♗f5 30 ♗a3 ♖xd3 31 ♖xd3 ♘d7, which would have offered definite chances to hold too.

**29 ♘b6 ♖d8 30 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 31 ♗a3 ♖c7**

Only around here did Caruana really begin to think, so impressively deep had been his preparation. White's pieces enjoy open lines and the engines are fairly confident that his advantage should be large enough for a successful conversion, but clearly in practice breaking down Black's position was always going to be far from a trivial task.

**32 ♖f4**

The engines have no fear of the queenside pawns getting out of control and calmly advocate 32 ♗b2!? ♘a5 33 ♖c1.

**32...♘f6 33 ♗b2 ♘e7 34 ♗xf6!**

A big decision, but it's very hard to believe that White will be able to win if he doesn't fracture the black kingside structure.

**34...gxf6 35 h4?!**

Very committal, whether or not deep analysis reveals it to be a mistake. Instead, White might have created a safe spot for his king while keeping all his options open with 35 h3!?; ♖fd4-d7 might follow or ♖df3 and some sort of kingside probe. Instead, Caruana arguably rushed, if more on the board than on the clock, where he still held a large time advantage.

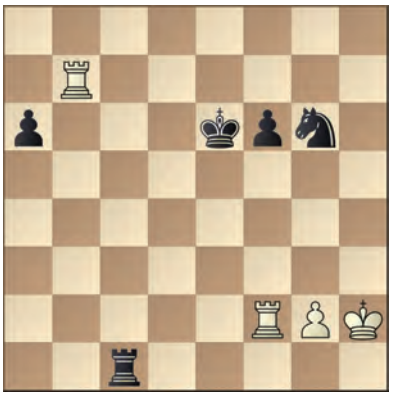
**35...h5!**

Holding White up and preparing to do so further with ...♘f5 if allowed.

**36 ♖g3+ ♔f7 37 ♖g5**

This raid must have been what convinced Caruana to go for 35 h4, but it turns out that Vachier-Lagrave has judged things the better. He is happy to give up b7 if it means removing one of White's two remaining pawns.

**37...♖c1+! 38 ♔h2 ♘g6 39 ♖f2 ♘xh4 40 ♖xh5 ♘g6 41 ♖h7+ ♔e6 42 ♖xb7**



With the time control reached, Vachier-Lagrave properly had time to think. Now 42...♖c6 would be sensible, but he saw no reason not to allow a trade of rooks.

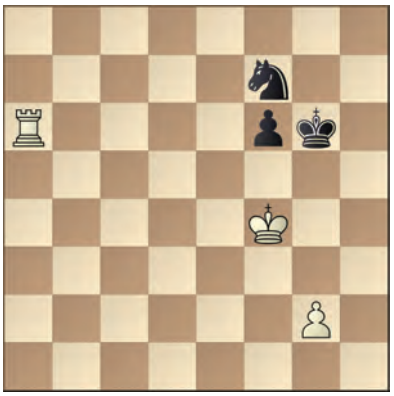
**42...♘e5 43 ♖b6+ ♖c6!**

Unapproved by the engines, at least initially without tablebase access, but clearly the right move so long as Black is happy that he can set up a fortress.

**44 ♖xc6+ ♘xc6 45 ♔g3 ♔f7!**

The king heads for g6. White will be able to win the a-pawn, but shouldn't be able to also win the game – so long as Black doesn't falter.

**46 ♖c2 ♘b4 47 ♖d2 ♘c6 48 ♔f4 ♔g6 49 ♖d6 ♘e5 50 ♖xa6 ♘f7**



A key position and one you may even wish to commit to memory. Black's knight is on the ideal circuit for keeping the white king at bay, although it will need to switch its pivot from f7 to g7 at some point.

**51 ♔e4 ♘h6**

Not 51...♘e5? 52 ♖a8! when White's king would have been able to get into f5, but 51...♔g5!? 52 ♖a5+ (or 52 ♔d5 f5 53 ♔e6 ♘h6) 52...♔g4 53 ♔d5 ♘h6 54 ♔e6 ♔g3 would have been an active and good alternative, Black removing the last pawn after 55 ♔xf6 ♘g4+ 56 ♔g5 ♘f2 and 57...♔xg2. In the game, however, Vachier-Lagrave was quite content to trust in his fortress.

**52 ♖a5**

Only after 52 ♔d5 dare we say that Black might would have advanced and 52...♔f5 (or 52...♔g5) holds the draw, as with 53 ♖a3 ♘f7 54 ♖f3+ ♔g6 55 ♖f4 ♔g5 56 ♖f2 ♘h6 57 ♔e6 f5 58 ♖f1 f4 59 ♔e5 ♘g4+ 60 ♔e4 ♘f6+ 61 ♔f3 ♔f5 followed by

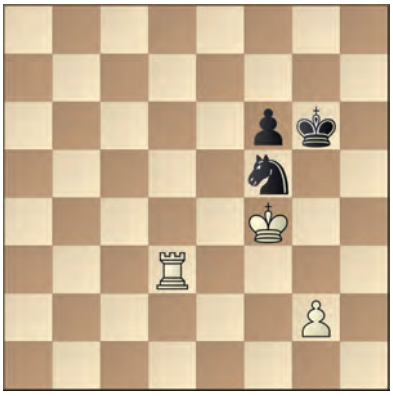
*Maxime Vachier-Lagrave defended like a tiger after being caught out in his beloved Najdorf, only for disaster to strike late on.*

...♘g4-e5(+).

**52...♘f7 53 ♖a3**

White is in no rush, Caruana content to probe and hope Black prematurely relaxes his guard...

**53...♘d6+ 54 ♔f4 ♘f5 55 ♖d3!**



**55...♘h6?**

...which after such a fine, long defence, stemming really right from being hit with 18 ♗c4!?, Vachier-Lagrave does. Caissa can be a cruel mistress at times. White has cleverly manoeuvred to ensure that the black knight cannot continue to revolve around its f7 pivot, but 55...♘g7! would have drawn, denying the white king access to h5 and e6, as well as f5. After, for instance, 56 ♖d6 (or 56 ♔e4 ♔g5 57 ♖d8 ♔g6 58 ♔d5 ♘f5 59 ♖g8+ ♔f7 when everything is holding and g2 very much still a target) 56...♘f5 57 ♖b6 ♘g7 White would have struggled to involve his king and 58 ♔e4 ♘f5 59 ♖b3 ♘g7 60 ♔d5 ♘h5! would have seen Black's counter-play continuing to arrive in the nick of time.

**56 ♖g3+! ♔f7 57 ♔e4**

Now there's no longer a fortress, although clearly White is going to have to be quite precise to prove that.

**57...♘g8**

Likewise, 57...♔e6 58 ♖a3 ♘f7 59 ♖a6+ ♘d6+ 60 ♔d4 would be fatal and here even 58...♔f7!? 59 ♖b3 (59 ♔d5? ♘f5 60 ♔e4 ♔g6 gets Black back on track) 59...♔g6 should be lost sooner or later, as with 60 ♖g3+! ♔f7 61 ♔f4 ♔e6 62 ♖h3 ♘f7 63 ♖a3.

**58 ♔f5**

58 ♖d3!? was arguably more accurate and if 58...♔g6 59 ♖b3 (but not 59 ♖d5? ♘h6!) 59...♘e7 (59...♘h6 60 ♖g3+ ♔f7 61 ♔f4 is winning, as we saw above) 60 ♖b5! ♔f7 61 ♖b7 ♔e6 62 ♖a7 when something will clearly give sooner or later and Black's counterplay is clearly much diminished in comparison with the lines which we saw in the notes to his 55th move.

**58...♘e7+ 59 ♔f4 ♘d5+ 60 ♔g4?**

Threatening ♔h5, but to win White needed to find the tricky 60 ♔f5 ♘e7+ 61 ♔e4!.

**60...♔g6 61 ♔f3+ ♔f7!**

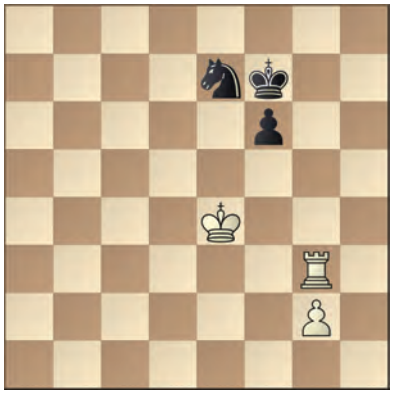
Black is back to having a fortress...

**62 ♔e4 ♘e7?**

...if not for long. 62...♘c7! was the way to go, once again getting the knight on to the e6-g7 route.

**63 ♔f4 ♘d5+ 64 ♔f5 ♘e7+ 65 ♔e4!**

This time Caruana finds the right way to pirouette.



**65...♘g8 66 ♖h3 ♔g6 67 ♖a3 ♔f7**

There's just nothing to be done for Black, with 67...♘h6 68 ♖g3+ ♔f7 69 ♔f4 setting up a familiar winning position for White.

**68 ♔f4 ♘h6 69 ♖g3 ♘g8 70 ♔g4! ♘e7**

70...♘h6+ 71 ♔h5! ♘f5 72 ♖f3 is also a fairly easy win by now, as shown by 72...♘d6 73 ♔h6 ♘e4 74 g4 ♘g5 75 ♖e3 ♘e6 76 ♖a3.

**71 ♔h5** Beginning the decisive invasion.

**71...♘d5 72 ♖f3 ♔e6 73 g4 ♔e5 74 ♔g6 1-0**

Black's final pawn is falling and with it the game, as if 74...♘f4+ 75 ♔f7 ♘d5 76 ♖f5+ ♔e4 77 ♖xd5! ♔xd5 78 ♔xf6.

A big result, and the other three games were all drawn. The all-Chinese clash fairly quickly after a sharp Scotch quickly gave way to opposite-side castling and perpetual check, and Nepomniachtchi was also happy to repeat moves at a fairly early stage, content to play his way into the tournament after being surprised by the Sveshnikov from Anish Giri. Caruana and Vachier-Lagrave weren't the last to finish, however, as the all-Russian clash involved two time scrambles and took play into a seventh hour of play, reminding chess fans just what we've been missing for most of the past year.

In a sharp French Poisoned Pawn (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘fd7 5 f4 c5 6 ♘f3 ♘c6 7 ♗e3 cxd4 8 ♘xd4 ♕b6 9 ♕d2 ♕xb2), Alexander Grischuk was allowed to return the extra pawn and exchange queens. He proceeded to outmanoeuvre tailender Kirill Alekseenko, but then failed to exploit a definite chance in the run-up to move 40 before a balanced, but also rather unbalanced endgame arose.

**K.Alekseenko-A.Grischuk**
Round 8

*In the first two rounds after the resumption, Kirill Alekseenko looked an improved player, beating Grischuk before losing to the leader.*

Here 35...♖xd6+!? 36 ♔xc4 ♖c8+ 37 ♔b3 ♖d5 would have forced White to be slightly accurate, but Grischuk saw no reason not to pocket the exchange.

**35...♗b3 36 ♖xg7+! ♔xg7 37 ♖xd3 a4?**

White is able to effect a strong regrouping after this, so Black should have preferred the immediate 37...♗e6!, and if 38 ♘g5 (not 38 ♘d2? ♖c8) 38...♗f5 39 ♘e4 ♖c8, preparing to exchange on e4 then invade the seventh rank. Even this is probably drawn, but would surely have posed White greater difficulties than the game.

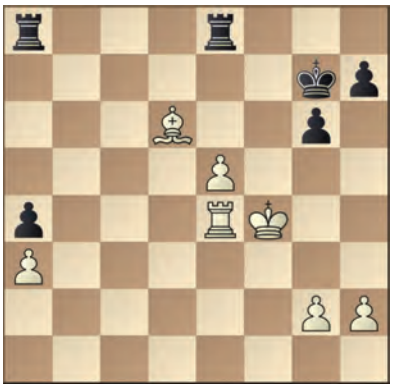
**38 ♘d2! ♗e6 39 ♘e4 ♗f5 40 ♖e3**

Threatening ♘c5 and now after the exchange Black finds himself not yet ready to invade.

**40...♗xe4 41 ♖xe4 ♖f8**

By now the onus would be on Black, at least as much as White, to draw after 41...♖c8 42 ♔d5 ♖c2 43 e6 ♖xg2 44 e7.

**42 ♔e3 ♖fe8 43 ♔f4 ♖a8!?**



Not the most active square for the rook, but as Daniil Dubov pointed out in the official commentary, Grischuk's plan might have been to play a number of surprising moves in a bid to cause Alekseenko to overpress. If that was the case, the plan was to rather backfire.

**44 ♖b4 ♖a7 45 ♔e4 ♔f7 46 ♖b6 ♖c8 47 ♗b4 ♖ac7 48 ♔d5! ♖c2 49 e6+ ♔f6 50 ♖b7 g5!?**

Striving for the win. White wouldn't have had to acquiesce to a repetition after 50...♖8c7 51 ♖b8 ♖c8 52 ♖b7 ♖8c7, but

even 53 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 54 ♔d6 ♖c4 55 ♔d7 ♖d4+! 56 ♗d6 ♖e4 is pretty much just a dead draw.

**51 ♖xh7 ♖xg2 52 ♔d6 ♔g6 53 ♖h3 g4!?**

53...♖e2 would have been prudent, but Grischuk clearly wanted his own passed pawn.

**54 ♖e3 ♖xh2 55 ♔d7 ♖hh8 56 e7**

Black might have won a pawn, but clearly if anyone needs to be careful here, it's him.

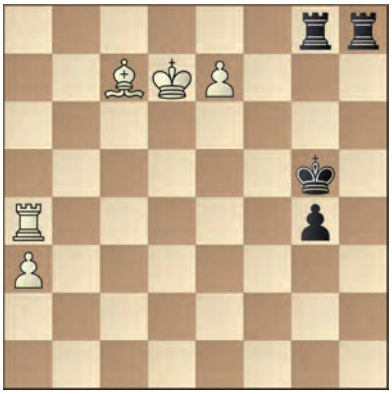
**56...♖ce8 57 ♗d6! ♖a8**

By now Grischuk was happy to allow White to queen and so escape with half a point. An alternative drawing path was the counterintuitive 57...♔f5!? 58 ♖e5+ ♔f4!.

**58 ♗c7**

After 58 e8♕+ ♖hxe8 59 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 60 ♔xe8 ♔f5 61 ♔d7 ♔e4 62 ♔c6 ♔f5! 63 ♔b5 ♔e6 the fact that White has the wrong-coloured bishop for his a-pawn means that it's just a classic draw.

**58...♖ag8 59 ♖e4! ♔f5 60 ♖f4+ ♔g5 61 ♖xa4**



The a-pawn will be a useful asset and despite now gaining a further 15 minutes on the clock, Grischuk was to falter.

**61...♔h4?**

61...♖h7! was required, and if 62 ♗g3 something like 62...♔h5 63 ♖a5+ ♔g6 64 ♗d6 ♖f7, keeping open the options of both a timely ...♔f6 and ...♔g5-h4. If this can somehow be won for White, it seems surprisingly tricky to do so.

**62 ♖e4**

62 ♗d6 ♔h3 63 ♖e4 also would have done the trick, since now White is, of course, quite happy to queen the e-pawn.

**62...♖a8 63 a4 ♔g5 64 a5**

The g-pawn is going nowhere and White's forces are just too well coordinated. In short, Black is condemned to marking time and hoping that White won't be able to stumble upon the right path.

**64...♖h7 65 ♔c6 ♖hh8 66 ♔d7 ♖h7 67 ♔c6**

67 ♔d6! would have placed Black in zugzwang, and if 67...♖hh8 68 ♖e1! ♔f6 69 ♔d7 ♖h7 70 ♖f1+ or 67...♖e8 68 ♗d8 g3 69 ♖e1 when Black would have been too slow.

**67...♖hh8 68 ♖e3 ♖he8?**

Making it easy for White. 68...♔f6? would have failed to 69 ♗e5+, but 68...♔f5! 69 ♔d7 ♖h7 would have continued to put up definite resistance. Indeed, it's not completely impossible that White might be unable to win after 70 ♔d6 (or 70 ♗d8 ♔f4) 70...♖h6+ 71 ♔d5 ♖hh8.

**69 ♔d7 ♔f6 70 ♖e6+ ♔f7 71 ♖e4 ♔f6 72 ♗d8**

Decisively severing Black's control of the eighth rank.

**72...♔f5 73 ♔xe8 ♔xe4 74 ♔f8 1-0**

## Giri Makes His Move

It could hardly be a Candidates tournament without the Catalan Opening making an appearance and Giri inflicted some model Catalan torture on Wang Hao, whom it must be said didn't look at his best.

**A.Giri-Wang Hao**
Round 9
*Catalan Opening*

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 g3 ♗e7 5 ♗g2 0-0 6 0-0 dxc4 7 ♕c2 a6 8 a4 ♗d7**

*Anish Giri made his move in round 9 as he outplayed Wang Hao to continue his fine run of recent form. The Dutch no.1 would only falter and drop of contention in the final two rounds.*

# A little bird just told me

**A round-up of what the top players and chess personalities have been saying on Twitter**

**Yan Nepomniachtchi - @lachesisq**
Very happy to win #FIDECandidates. See you in Dubai, @MagnusCarlsen!

**Magnus Carlsen - @MagnusCarlsen**
JUST WON A CHESS TOURNAMENT AGAIN.

**Anish Giri - @anishgiri**
Also great to see Hikaru and Shakh do so well again!

**Gawain Jones - @GMGawain**
Congratulations to @MagnusCarlsen on winning #NewInChess #ChessChamps. Obviously my own result was disappointing, but really enjoyed the challenge and am very grateful to have the opportunity. I feel I learnt a lot and am looking forward to battling again soon.

**Chessable White Rose 4NCL - @WhiteRoseChess**
A valiant effort by @Kaldas90, but unfortunately unable to quite convert the endgame. It's a 2-2 draw, but Guildford hold the tiebreak because we lost on 2 and won on 3. The tightest possible margin. WR1 and WR2 are out at the semifinal stage.

**Celtic Tigers 4NCL - @CelticTigersCC**
Tigers (& @GSharks4NCL) win the semi-final of @4NCL Online Division 1! - Bring on the FINAL! Unfortunately for us, @LewishamChess Catford Cosmonauts were too much for the 2nd's losing on tiebreak in a tight 2-2 battle. Good luck to them in the final.

**Olimpiù Urcan - @olimpiuurcan**
Mikhail Tal [in his autobiography]: "I am probably a little jealous if the spectators react noisily to a move made on a neighbouring board or by my opponent, and not by me."

**Gchess - @gingerchess**
The wait is over... GChess is here! Register now for free and see how GChess can improve your game! http://gchess.com

**Paul Barasi - @PaulBarasi**
#Wimbledon doing what every #Chess Club can do – offer residents a free game at a local park. Ten club members yesterday proved: Yes we can play over-the-board weekend social chess by using outdoor community space. Let's green the game for everyone everywhere!

**9 ♕xc4 ♗c6 10 ♗f4 ♗d6 11 ♘c3!?**

Refusing to fear doubled f-pawns is a fairly common motif in the Catalan. Interestingly, Giri had previously been seen on the black side, including in Ding Liren-Giri, Hainan (online rapid) 2020, where 11 ♗e3 h6 12 ♘c3 ♕e7 13 ♘e5 ♗xg2 14 ♔xg2 ♘bd7 was typically rock-solid for Black, although Ding did go on to grind out the full point.

**11...♗xf4 12 gxf4 a5 13 e3 ♘a6 14 ♘e5**

White might as well exploit his fine grip on e5 to land a knight there.

**14...♗xg2 15 ♔xg2 c6 16 h3!?**

A new move and a useful enough one, if perhaps not the product of hundreds of hours burning the midnight oil. 16 ♔h1!? followed by ♖g1 also makes some sense, but Giri is content to gradually manoeuvre. Carlsen was certainly impressed, later commenting that this was "A very, very good game. [Anish] managed to showcase all his strengths here, both in terms of planning and a little idea in the opening with h3."

**16...♕b6**

The first step in the wrong direction. Instead, 16...♘e8!? followed by ...♘d6 and ...♘b4 may well be solid enough for Black.

**17 ♕e2 c5?!**

Weakening b5 so cannot be good, although Wang Hao may have been concerned about a gradual kingside build-up after, say, 17...♖fd8 18 ♖ad1 ♘b4 19 ♔h2 and ♖g1.

**18 ♖fd1**

Keeping the tension rather than rush with 18 ♕b5!?, although this would by no means have been weak, White finding himself playing for just two results in the event of the lengthy exchanging sequence 18...♕xb5 19 axb5 cxd4 20 bxa6 dxc3 21 axb7 ♖a7 22 bxc3 ♖xb7 23 ♖xa5.

**18...cxd4 19 ♖xd4 ♖ad8**

*Citing ill health, Wang Hao was to stun the chess world by announcing his retirement at the end of the Candidates. We very much hope such a creative player only means as a professional.*

Giri was unsure after the game why he didn't just play ♕b5 two moves earlier or here. After 20 ♕b5! ♕xb5 21 axb5 ♖xd4 22 exd4 ♘c7 23 ♖xa5 ♖a8 24 ♖xa8+ ♘xa8 25 ♘c4 perhaps Black can scrape a draw, but clearly White is risking little and can grind away, despite his rather shattered structure.

**20 ♖xd8 ♕xd8 21 ♖d1 ♕a8!?**

This offers some support to the potential weakness on a5 and also aims for timely counterplay down the long diagonal. Giri's ultra-calm next cuts out such possibilities.

**22 ♔g1!? ♘b4 23 ♕b5 ♘bd5 24 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 25 ♖c1**

White continues to grind away and enjoys a pleasant edge, even if one would normally have expected a player of the calibre of Wang Hao to have had a pretty good go at making a draw from here.

**25...h6**

25...♖d8!? was also possible, and if 26 ♘c4 ♖c8 27 f5! b6!, thereby keeping the size of White's advantage under control.

**26 ♕d7 ♘f6?!**

Why not just 26...♘b6, and if 27 ♕c7 (or 27 ♕d6 ♕d8) 27...♘d5? However, not here 27...♘xa4?? as the knight won't make it out alive after 28 b3 ♘b2.

**27 ♕d6**

White is beginning to turn the screw and would now have met 27...♕d8? with 28 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 29 ♖c7, since Black doesn't have any immediate counterplay with his knight.

**27...g6?**

Weakening. Wang Hao needed to keep his rook on f8 to overprotect f7, but might have counterattacked with 27...♕e8 28 b3 b5 when 29 ♖c6 is unpleasant for Black, but still far from fatally so.

**28 b3 h5**

Now it's too late for 28...♕e8 on account of 29 ♖c7, and if 29...b5 30 axb5 ♕xb5 31 ♘xg6!.

**29 ♔h2!**

Another little king move and further good prophylaxis from Giri, who will no longer have to worry about any counter-checks on his back rank.

**29...♔g7 30 ♕d4**

30 ♕b6 was also strong, but it would have been hard not to line the queen up on the same diagonal as Black's knight and king.

**30...♖d8 31 ♕b2 ♕b8 32 b4?**

Giri wants to go after b7, but 32 ♕c3! was indicated, and if 32...♕a8 33 ♕c7 ♖f8 34 ♖g1! followed by a powerful blow on g6, all the while making neat use of the king's small step across to h2.

**32...axb4 33 ♖c4?**

The point of White's play, but he needed to

settle for 33 ♕xb4 ♘d5 34 ♕d4 (or 34 ♕b1) 34...f6 35 ♘f3 to maintain a clear plus.

**33...b3?**

Missing a hard-to-spot drawing mechanism, namely 33...♖d1! 34 ♖xb4 ♕d6! 35 ♖xb7 ♕d5 36 ♖xf7+ ♔h6 when White lacks a good move and after 37 ♖xf6 (or 37 ♕b7 ♖h1+ 38 ♔g3 ♖g1+ when White must go backwards, not allow 39 ♔h4?? ♕xe5! 40 fxe5 g5#) 37...♖h1+ 38 ♔g3 ♖xh3+! 39 ♔xh3 ♕h1+ 40 ♔g3 h4+! the h-pawn saves the day and leaves Black with perpetual check.

**34 ♖b4! ♕a7?**

This is hopeless. It probably wouldn't have saved the game, but 34...♕d6 35 ♕xb3 ♕d2 36 ♔g2 ♔g8 37 ♖xb7 ♘e4 was the last chance, forcing White to go in for 38 ♕b2 ♕xb2 39 ♖xb2 ♖a8 40 ♖b7 ♖xa4 41 ♘xf7 ♖a2 42 ♘g5.

**35 ♖xb3 ♕xa4 36 ♖xb7 ♕e8 37 ♖a7!**

So overwhelming is White's control and pressure that he doesn't even need to take on f7 and give Black hope of fortress.

**37...♖d5**

37...♕g8 38 ♕b7 ♖f8 would be disgustingly passive and is unsurprisingly hopelessly lost after 39 ♕e7.

**38 ♕b7 ♘e4 39 ♘xf7 1-0**

Elsewhere Nepomniachtchi was surprised by Grischuk in an 8 ♖b1 Grünfeld (8...0-0 9 h3!?), and was undoubtedly slightly worse, but defended solidly then actively to make a draw, despite his opponent's attempts to "play roulette" around the time control. Caruana wasn't able to close the gap, though, despite outmanoeuvring Alekseenko on the black side of the ever popular Giuoco Piano. The world no.2 had one definite opportunity to swipe a free pawn on a4, but dallied and by the time the pawn did fall, Alekseenko defended well and always looked likely to hold, optically much better though Black was in the arising rook ending.

That left Caruana still sharing second on '+1' with Vachier-Lagrave, who was pretty fortunate to survive after being hit by 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 h4!? from Ding and only able to grovel his way to a major-piece endgame which must surely have been lost, but a possibly rusty Ding rushed to advance Delroy, thereby squandering half a point.

## Nepo Extends His Lead

The conspiracy theorists were out in force after the tournament leader enjoyed a rather easy victory against Alekseenko, who was quickly an hour behind and with a horrible position. Rather than Kremlin orders, we suspect that the lower-rated Russian was surprised by the Reti, badly mixed up his move order and quickly landed up in one of those Catalans from hell, which we've all stumbled into on occasion. As Daniil Dubov put it, "It's quite a common mistake that you prepare all the main lines and you kind of spend less time looking at some sidelines and tricky move orders. So 1 c4 ♘f6 2 g3 is not exactly what worries you most."

*I'm confident and looking at you - Ian Nepomniachtchi was outplayed by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave back in round 7, but had the better of a draw when they met again in a pivotal round 13.*

**I.Nepomniachtchi-K.Alekseenko**
Round 10
*Reti Opening*

**1 c4 ♘f6 2 g3 e6 3 ♗g2 d5 4 ♘f3 dxc4 5 ♕a4+ ♘bd7 6 ♕xc4 a6 7 ♕c2 c5 8 ♘c3 ♗e7**

Rather routine and a talented young compatriot of Alekseenko's had already shown the way to go: 8...♕c7?! 9 0-0 b6 10 d4 ♗b7 11 ♗f4 ♗d6 12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 ♖fd1 0-0 14 e4 ♕c7 was very solid for Black, who eventually went on to win in Donchenko-Esipenko, Wijk aan Zee 2021.

**9 0-0 0-0 10 d4 cxd4?**

Black is unpleasantly worse after this, but even biting the bullet with 10...b5! wouldn't have fully equalised in view of 11 ♘e5 (11 ♘g5 ♖a7 doesn't seem too bad for Black) 11...♘xe5! 12 dxe5! (12 ♗xa8 cxd4 13 ♘e4 ♘d5 would supply excellent compensation for the exchange) 12...♘d5 13 ♘xd5 exd5 14 ♗e3 when the onus remains on Black to demonstrate equality after 14...♗e6 15 ♗xc5 ♕c7 16 b4.

**11 ♘xd4 ♕c7 12 ♖d1**

White's pieces flow to good squares and his Catalan bishop is a right monster. Clearly matters have already gone wrong for Black, who is struggling to untangle his queenside.

**12...♖d8**

12...♘c5 had previously been tried in Korobkov-Provotorov,Voronezh 2008, where White had a number of tempting and strong continuations, including 13 ♘e4!? ♘fxe4 14 ♗xe4 (threatening h7, as well as b2-b4) 14...f5 15 ♗g2 e5 16 ♘b3 when Black comes under heavy pressure thanks to all his weaknesses.

**13 ♗e3**

13 ♗f4!? e5 14 ♘f5 must also have tempted the clubhouse leader.

**13...♘b6 14 ♖ac1 e5**

Simple chess. White's pieces flow to good squares and now 14...♗d7? would have been met by 15 ♕b3 when Black's whole position is simply rather loose.

**15 ♘f5 ♗xf5**

There goes the bishop-pair, but after 15...♗f8 White can even produce *une petite combinaison* with 16 ♘xg7!? ♔xg7 17 ♕b3, and if 17...♘c4 18 ♖xd8 ♘xe3 19 ♖xf8 ♔xf8 20 ♕b4+ ♔g7 21 ♕h4!?, thereby ensuring that he regains the piece with plenty of interest.

**16 ♕xf5**

**16...♘c4**

This feels suspicious, but what else to do as Black? Indeed, Alekseenko was already close to lost by this stage, as we can appreciate too from 16...g6 17 ♕b1 ♖xd1+ 18 ♘xd1 when b7 would have fallen for starters. Never underestimate the power of the Reti Opening as Black!

**17 ♗g5 ♖xd1+**

17...♕c8 18 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 19 ♖d1 also looks most unpleasant, and if 19...♕c8 20 ♕xc8+ ♖xc8 21 ♗xb7 ♖b8 22 ♗xa6 ♘xb2 23 ♖b1.

**18 ♘xd1**

It's not quite a case of pin and win, but unsurprisingly Black's position is already pretty much on life support.

**18...♖d8 19 ♗xf6! ♗xf6 20 ♗e4**

Fittingly White breaks through with the aid of his mighty unopposed light-squared bishop.

**20...♕a5 21 ♘c3 ♔f8 22 ♘d5!**

Cutting the king off and now 22...♖xd5 23 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 (or 23...♘d6 24 ♕d7! ♕xd5 25 ♖c8+) would have failed to 24 ♕c8+ ♔e7 25 ♕xc4.

**22...b5 23 ♕xh7! ♖xd5 24 ♗xd5 ♕d2**

A last throw of the dice, but unsurprisingly Nepomniachtchi has everything under control.

**25 ♖xc4! bxc4 26 e4**

26 ♕h8+ ♔e7 27 ♕a8 also does the business. Both there and in the game, one bishop is a bystander; the other, a dominant and decisive presence.

**26...♕xb2 27 ♕h8+ ♔e7 28 ♕c8 ♕b6**

Hopeless, but if 28...c3 29 ♕c7+ ♔e8 30 ♗c6+ ♔f8 31 ♕c8+ ♔e7 32 ♕d7+ followed by mate.

**29 ♕xc4 ♕b5 30 ♕c7+ ♕d7 31 ♕c5+ 1-0**

Black is losing his a-pawn and still has absolutely zero counterplay.

That left Nepomniachtchi a whole point clear heading into the first of two scheduled rest days. Elsewhere, Caruana came seemingly well-prepared in an anti-Marshall for Ding, but failed to follow up his pawn sacrifice correctly and was soon the side having to play actively to scramble a half point, which was not how the American superstar would have wanted to see his second white game go. Meanwhile Wang Hao-Grischuk was a crazy draw, as we saw in the Editorial, while Vachier-Lagrave out prepared and outplayed Giri to enjoy a clear advantage in the shape of an additional passed d-pawn, but opposite-coloured bishops were present and came to the Dutchman's rescue after White failed to find the most promising path.

## Joker not Choker

Round 11 was a big round and one which signalled the end of Vachier-Lagrave's chances, the halfway co-leader being out

*One minute Ding Liren thought he was attacking against Anish Giri, the next he was a piece up, but getting mated. The world no.3 would bounce back to win his final three games.*

prepared by Grischuk in a critical line of the Gashimov Sicilian (1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 d6 3 d4!? cxd4 4 ♕xd4 ♘c6 5 ♕d2, as covered by Gawain Jones in his upcoming *Coffeehouse Repertoire* for Quality Chess), but as he fell back, Giri advanced to '+2', being prepared to mix things up and even sacrifice a piece en route to a striking victory over Ding Liren.

### A.Giri-Ding Liren
Round 11
*Ruy Lopez*

**1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♗xc6**

The Delayed Exchange Lopez Deferred (the infamous 'DERLD'), a sometime favourite of Luke McShane's.

**6...dxc6 7 d3 ♗d6 8 ♘bd2 ♗e6 9 ♘b3!?**

A new idea. Previously, 9 b3 ♘d7 10 a4 a5 11 ♘c4 ♗xc4 12 bxc4 0-0 13 ♖b1 ♖e8 14 c3 b6 had been very solid for Black in Le Quang Liem-Jones, Saint Louis 2019.

**9...♕e7 10 ♘a5 0-0-0**

Ding takes up the challenge, although Black might also settle for the solid and thematic enough 10...♖b8 11 b3 0-0 12 ♗b2 ♘d7!.

**11 ♕e2 ♗g4**

Pinning and now Black would quite like to go ...♘d7-c5(f8)-e6. White's position may not look overly impressive, but kudos to Giri and his second Erwin L'Ami, who had looked much deeper into the position and realised that White, just as much if not even more than Black, would obtain attacking chances.

**12 c3 c5?!**

Clamping down on d4, but creating a hook for White's queenside expansion was risky, to say the least. 12...♘d7 would still have been more sensible when after 13 h3 Black might exchange and then prepare ...g5 or possibly even wish to consider 13...♗h5 14 b4 f5!?, with the idea of 15 exf5 g6 16 g4 (16 f6! ♕e6 17 ♖e1 is probably the critical test) 16...gxf5 17 gxh5 e4 with very dangerous compensation for the piece.

**13 a3 c6 14 b4 ♗c7 15 ♘b3**

Pressuring e5, but 15 ♘c4!? might have been even stronger, facilitating a timely ♘e3, as well as a3-a4.

**15...♘d7 16 h3 ♗h5 17 ♗e3?**

Continuing to pressure c5 doesn't work out well. Instead, 17 ♖b1 would have left everything to play for, since now White can meet 17...f5?! simply with 18 exf5!, and if 18...c4 19 dxc4 e4 20 g4.

**17...f5!**

A strong pawn sacrifice. White's problem is

that now 18 exf5 c4 19 dxc4? e4 would simply cost him a piece.

**18 ♗xc5 ♕f7 19 ♖ab1!?**

In some trouble, Giri stakes everything on a counterattack, rather than try to beat off the attack with, say, 19 ♘bd2.

**19...g5!?**

Very tempting, but 19...fxe4! 20 ♕xe4!? (20 dxe4 ♘xc5 21 ♘xc5 ♖hf8 would be quite strong) 20...♗g6! (20...♘f6 21 ♕f5+ ♕d7 22 ♕xd7+ ♖xd7 23 d4 might enable White to wriggle out after 23...♗xf3 24 gxf3 b6 25 dxe5) 21 ♘g5!? ♕f6 22 ♕e3 b6 would have been stronger, when White shouldn't be able to obtain quite enough for a piece.

**20 exf5 g4?**

Now White is more than back in the game, whereas 20...♕xf5! 21 ♕e4 ♕f6 22 ♘fd2 ♗g6 would still have left Black slightly for choice.

**21 ♘g5!**

Giri shows that he's up for the calculation challenge and now 21...gxh3 22 ♘xf7 ♗xe2 23 ♘xd8 ♖xd8 24 g3 ♗xd3 25 f6! would have left White with a clear plus.

**21...♕xf5 22 h4!**

Keeping lines closed as it quickly becomes clear that Ding has rather shot his bolt.

**22...b6 23 ♘e4!?**

There was nothing wrong with 23 ♗e3, but the text shows Giri's new-found confidence and free spirit, as he trusts in his attack to crash through.

**23...bxc5**

Objectively, Black may have done better to have declined the piece with 23...g3!? 24 ♕b2 gxf2+ 25 ♖xf2 ♕g6, clearly worse though he would have been after 26 ♗e3.

**24 bxc5 ♘f6?**

24...♘b8 would have been more stubborn, but even here after 25 ♘d6+! (or just 25 ♕b2) 25...♗xd6 26 cxd6 ♖xd6 27 ♕e3 White would have enjoyed a monstrous attack with ♕a7 the immediate threat.

**25 ♘d6+! ♗xd6 26 cxd6 ♖xd6 27 d4**

Once again, the introduction of the white queen into the attack swiftly heralds the end for the badly exposed black monarch.

**27...c5**

Black surely wouldn't have survived either after 27...♔d8 28 ♘a5 ♖e8 29 ♕xa6.

**28 ♘xc5 ♖e8 29 ♕c4 1-0**

Meanwhile the leader, Nepomniachtchi, was content to keep things solid at the back, opting for the Scotch Four Knights against Caruana in a game which never veered far from equality. Presumably the Russian Champion and no.1 had realised that "in all of 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2018 the Candidates' leader after five rounds (and always on '+2' – just as Nepomniachtchi was) [had] gone on to qualify for the next world championship match", just as we pointed out in our May issue last year.

And, finally, Wang Hao tried to mix things up with 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♘f6 4 d3 h6!? 5 c3 d6 6 ♘bd2 g5 and would gradually outplay Alekseenko, if only to reach a pawn-ahead queen and bishop endgame in which White was always active enough to hold the draw.

*A spacious stage and one with a number of different types of chair on display. Unsurprisingly, the players were very well looked after in Yekaterinburg, which was more relaxed than last year.*

## Blood on the Board

The twelfth round ahead of the final rest day was an especially bloodthirsty affair. Ding Liren-Grischuk appeared to be heading for a fairly lifeless draw, until the Russian took a chance on move 40, which left him suffering and just seven moves later he had to resign. Vachier-Lagrave was surprised by 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 from Alekseenko, but after 3 f3 the surprise value was all White's, who quickly built up a huge position, netted a pawn and displayed immaculate technique to convert.

But what of those still in the hunt? Well, in a game which both sides rather wanted to win, Giri produced some of his best chess to outplay Caruana and with the black pieces no less.

**F.Caruana-A.Giri**
Round 12
*Sicilian Scheveningen*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♘c6**

Giri offers the Four Knights route into the Sveshnikov (6 ♘db5 d6 7 ♗f4 e5 8 ♗g5 a6 9 ♘a3 b5), while avoiding the Rossolimo in the process. It would appear that Caruana was nothing like as well prepared for this move order as the Najdorf, or at least he immediately took refuge in a sideline.

**6 a3 ♗e7 7 ♗e3 0-0 8 ♗e2 d6**

The Dutch superstar reveals his desire to fight, the alternative being for Black to try to equalise after 8...d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 11 ♗f3.

**9 ♕d3!?**

A new idea and one approved of by *Stockfish*. Previously, White had either gone short or 9 ♕d2 and long.

**9...♗d7**

Classical Scheveningen style play from Black. So too would be 9...a6 10 f4 ♘xd4 11 ♗xd4, but here 11...b5 12 0-0-0 ♗b7 13 g4! feels quite dangerous, since White is attacking even after 13...d5 14 ♕h3!?.

**10 f4**

This must be critical and 10 0-0-0 ♘e5 11 ♕d2 ♘fg4! would usefully enough pick off the bishop-pair for Black now that f2 is no longer overprotected.

**10...e5!**

Giri has handled the early surprise well, thematically reacting in the centre.

**11 ♘xc6 bxc6 12 0-0**

12 ♖f1!? is preferred by the

aforementioned *Stockfish*, and will no doubt receive a practical outing before too long.

**12...exf4 13 ♗xf4 ♗e6**

Natural, but it may be that Black does better with 13...♗g4!? when ideas of both a timely ...d5 and ...♕b6+ are on the cards.

**14 ♕g3!**

The ideal spot for the white queen, eyeing both d6 and g7. Now the engines have a penchant for the remarkable 14...h5!?; Giri prefers to regroup along classic Scheveningen lines.

**14...♘d7 15 ♖ad1 ♖e8 16 ♔h1**

Sensibly tucking the king away. White has nothing after 16 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 17 ♖xd6 ♕b6+ 18 ♔h1 ♕xb2, and if 19 ♖xc6 ♖ac8, but the immediate 16 b4!? was by no means ridiculous.

**16...♕b8 17 b4?!**

The tension is building, but while the text does buy White control of d5, it also weakens a number of squares. At first sight you might imagine that the calmer 17 b3 ♘e5 is fine for Black, but after 18 ♗h5 g6 19 ♘e2! White undoubtedly has some pressure.

**17...♘e5 18 b5 ♖c8!**

Black's counterplay down the c-file will offset the weakness of d5.

**19 bxc6 ♖xc6 20 ♘d5 ♕f8**

Giri is happy to give up the bishop-pair, trusting in the solid nature of his position. It's a good call, although so would have been 20...♗f8!?. Interestingly Giri sensed that "Fabiano was quite enthusiastic about his position, but after 20...♕f8, which is a good move, he probably realised that he is no longer playing for an advantage."

**21 c3**

21 ♘xe7+?! ♕xe7 22 ♗xe5 (or 22 ♗h6 ♘g6) 22...dxe5 23 ♕xe5 ♕xa3 would only have left Black doing pretty well with the superior structure and outside passed pawn.

**21...♖ac8 22 ♖c1?!**

We shouldn't forget that both players wanted to win this key encounter, but this may be the decision that Caruana landed up regretting the most. Instead, 22 ♗xe5! dxe5 23 ♕xe5 would have simplified and begun to lead play towards a draw: 23...♗xd5 (23...♗xa3!? 24 c4 a5 is a better winning try, although White is probably OK here too after 25 ♕a1 and e4-e5) 24 ♖xd5 ♖xc3 25 ♖d7 ♗f6 26 ♕f4 ♕c5 defends a7, but fails to also prevent e4-e5, with 27 e5! ♕xe5 28 ♕xe5 ♗xe5 29 ♖dxf7 surely set to land up as a draw since Black must avoid 29...♖xa3?? 30 ♗c4!.

*We wonder if in such a chess-loving nation, Anish Giri really had to announce who he was at the airport. He was certainly met there as the former St. Petersburg resident delighted the press.*

**22...♘g6!**

Caruana may have underestimated this retreat. Black is now pressing since he may well be able to exchange on d5 then f4 and emerge with the superior bishop.

**23 ♗d2?**

Very passive, but mistakes do often go together in pairs. 23 ♗g4! would have been a much more fighting response and after 23...♘xf4 24 ♘xf4 ♗xg4 25 ♕xg4 ♖xc3 26 ♖b1 White would have enjoyed undoubted compensation with his knight set to take up permanent residency on d5.

**23...♗h4!**

Maintaining an important bishop for the future.

**24 ♕e3 ♖c5 25 c4 h6!**

Despite his dark-square weaknesses, White would have been OK after 25...♗xd5 26 exd5 ♖e8 27 ♕f3, whereas now he is just in some trouble: the exchange of dark-squared bishops may well lead to a dream good knight against bad bishop endgame for Black.

**26 ♕b3**

Unfortunately for White, 26 ♗h5? is but a shot in the dark with c4 falling after 26...♗g5 27 ♕d4 ♗xd2 28 ♕xd2 ♘e5.

**26...♗g5 27 ♗xg5 hxg5 28 ♕g3**

28 ♘e3!? would have avoided an exchange on d5, although even here White will come under heavy pressure after 28...♘f4 29 ♕d1 ♕e7 followed by ...♖b8 and possibly ...♖a5.

**28...♕d8 29 ♖cd1 ♗xd5! 30 exd5 ♘f4**

The aforementioned ideal minor piece scenario for Black. Caruana has been completely outplayed.

**31 ♕f2 ♖8c7**

Keeping everything tight at the back. 31...♕e7 32 ♗g4 ♖e8 was also promising, since a rook exchange can but help Black.

**32 ♖d4 ♕e8 33 ♗f3 ♖xc4!?**

And why not pocket the pawn that's on offer? Giri trusts in his calculation and refuses to fear any ghosts.

**34 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 35 ♕xa7 ♖a4**

Black actually doesn't need the a-pawn; 35...g6!? followed by ...♕e5 also leaves him bossing the board.

**36 ♕f2?**

36 ♕c7!? ♖xa3 37 h4! would have given White an improved version of the game and some drawing chances, but not here 37 ♕xd6? on account of the brutal sacrifice 37...♖xf3!.

**36...♖xa3 37 h4**

The only real try, but White's cause should

*The start of a long and rather important encounter, as Ian Nepomniachtchi arrives with his lucky flask ready to take on Wang Hao with the black pieces and just three games left to go.*

by now be hopeless, being saddled with such a bishop and generally rather passive pieces.

**37...♕e5 38 hxg5 ♕xg5 39 ♖e1 ♖a8**

Avoiding any unnecessary drama before the time control.

**40 ♗e4 ♖a2!? 41 ♖b1!?**

Both sides can sacrifice. 41 ♕xa2? ♕h4+ 42 ♔g1 ♕xe1+ 43 ♔h2 ♕xe4 was, of course, Black's point.

**41...♖a8 42 ♖e1 f5!**

Forcing the pace. Giri has spied that the h-file is open.

**43 ♗b1 ♔f7 44 ♖e3 ♖h8+ 45 ♔g1**

**45...♘xg2! 0-1**

A neat finish to a very well played game from Giri. It's all over in view of 46 ♖g3 (or 46 ♕xg2 ♕xe3+) 46...♕c1+! 47 ♔xg2 ♕h1# or here if 47 ♕f1 then the classic motif 47...♖h1+!.

That left Giri temporarily tying the lead on '+3', but it was to be but temporary as Wang Hao collapsed in a tough endgame against Nepomniachtchi who thereby reached the dizzy heights for a Candidates of '+4'.

**Wang Hao-I.Nepomniachtchi**
Round 12

Thus far Nepomniachtchi has held his own in a protracted manoeuvring battle, stemming from a Petroff in which the queens came off early on. Black wants to bring a knight to the fine outpost on c4, but after, say, 33 ♔h1!? ♘d6 34 ♗f4 ♘c4 35 ♘d2 White would have continued to hold the balance. Instead, Wang Hao was to misjudge his attempt to simplify.

**33 bxa5?! ♗xa5 34 ♖xb7 ♘d6!**

Black definitely has a little something after this, whereas White would have been active enough after 34...♗xc3 35 ♗f4.

**35 ♖a7 ♗xc3 36 ♗d7!**

Despite trailing somewhat on the clock in the run-up to move 40, Wang Hao finds the best defence. Instead, 36 ♗f4 ♘c4 37 ♗d7 ♘xd7 38 ♖xd7 d4 would have seen Black most certainly having seized the initiative.

**36...♘xd7 37 ♗xc3+ ♖xc3 38 ♖xd7 ♖c6 39 ♖e7?!**

The source of White's difficulties. Simply 39 ♔f2 ♔f6 40 ♘d2 was indicated, and if 40...♔e6 41 ♖a7 when nothing too terrible should be happening to White, including after 41...♖c2 42 ♔e3 ♘c4+ 43 ♘xc4 dxc4 44 ♖c7.

**39...♖c2+ 40 ♔g1**

The king now becomes cut off, but 40 ♔h3 ♖f2 41 ♖e1 doesn't exactly look comfortable for White either.

**40...d4**

Delroy is on the march and Black is undoubtedly pressing.

**41 ♖d7 ♘f5 42 a5!**

Deprived of the services of his king and knight, White absolutely must involve the a-pawn if he's to have any hope of saving the game.

**42...♖a2 43 ♖a7?**

There's no time for his however. Wang Hao is normally good at thinking outside the box, but here failed to find 43 a6! ♖xa6 44 ♘d2 when the knight is back in play, g3-g4 threatened and White has good chances to hold whether Black overprotects d4 or allows 44...♖a2 45 ♘e4.

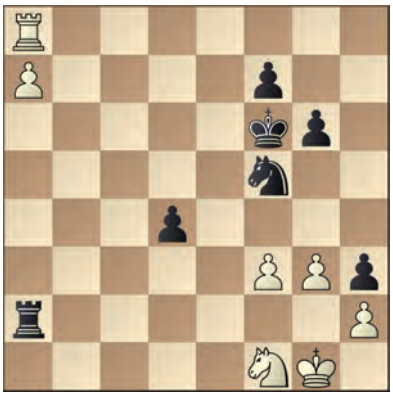
**43...♔f6?!**

Simple chess. The immediate 43...h4! 44 g4 ♘d6 was, however, somewhat more promising, with the devilish idea of ...♘b5-c3.

**44 a6 h4! 45 ♖a8**

Now the pawn will reach h3, but 45 gxh4? ♘xh4 46 f4 ♘f3+ 47 ♔h1 ♔e6 would have been the greater evil for White, again leaving him in effect two pieces in arrears.

**45...h3 46 a7**



The good news for White is that the pawn has reached the seventh; the bad, that he may struggle to move a piece. The position is drawn, if clearly far from easy for White and

Wang Hao would later berate himself for "playing like a 2200 from move 40".

**46...♔e7 47 g4**

As White doesn't seem to be getting mated, 47 ♘d2!? ♘e3 48 ♘e4 was a calm, alternative way to defend.

**47...♘d6 48 ♖b8! ♖xa7 49 ♖b4 d3 50 ♖b3**

The point of White's play. The d-pawn is falling, but even the three versus three situation isn't such an easy draw, due to the unfortunate position of the white king.

**50...♖a2 51 ♖xd3 ♘c4 52 ♘g3 ♖g2+ 53 ♔h1 ♔f8!?**

Very calm and a move which challenges Wang Hao to find something good to do.

**54 ♖c3?**

Underestimating the danger. White needed to find 54 g5 or 54 ♘e4.

**54...♘b2!**

With a certain threat of ...♘d1 and mate on f2.

**55 ♖c8+ ♔g7 56 ♖d8 ♖f2 57 ♔g1! ♖xf3 58 ♘e4 ♖e3 59 ♘g3?**

This was arguably the mistake which decided the Candidates. Had Wang Hao gone active with 59 ♘d6! Nepomniachtchi might not have won and would have found himself joined in the lead by Giri. Here Black still has 59...♖a3! (59...♔f6 60 g5+! ♔xg5 61 ♘xf7+ ♔f6 62 ♘h6 removes one pawn too many), but after 60 ♖d7! (60 ♔f2 ♘d1+! 61 ♔e2 ♘c3+ 62 ♔f2 ♔f6 isn't so pleasant) 60...♖a1+ 61 ♔f2 ♘d3+ 62 ♔g3 ♖g1+ 63 ♔h4! (and not 63 ♔xh3?? ♘f2+ 64 ♔h4 ♖xg4#) 63...♘e5 64 ♖b7 ♖xg4+ 65 ♔xh3 White would have retained definite drawing chances a pawn down.

**59...♖a3! 0-1**

Resignation was arguably premature, but Black threatens 60...♘c4 followed by ...♘d2 or ...♘e3, and even 60 ♖e8 ♘d3 61 ♖e3 ♖a1+ 62 ♘f1 ♘f4 63 ♖e4 g5 should be lost since White is so tied down.

## Grim Times for Giri

Needing a win to keep his very slim chances alive, Vachier-Lagrave went in for a double fianchetto against the English, but Nepomniachtchi maintained control and an edge, one which grew when Black strangely removed all the rooks after sacrificing a pawn, following which White was able to coast to a draw from a position of strength. By then it was clear that Giri was in real trouble against Grischuk and not even a typical lead on the clock could save the day and thereby the Dutch no.1's Candidates chances.

**A.Grischuk-A.Giri**
Round 13
*Queen's Indian Defence*

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♗b7 5 ♗g2 ♗b4+ 6 ♗d2 c5**

Bogo-Indian-like play. There's absolutely nothing wrong with such an approach, but it would be interesting to know why Giri chose it. Quite possibly he was wrong-footed by 1 d4 and decided to trust the small surprise he'd prepared for the second half of the tournament. Despite trailing by half a point, he may also not have been completely unhappy with a draw, aiming to beat Alekseenko the next day (which didn't happen), while relying on a nervous Nepomniachtchi to collapse against Ding (which did occur).

**7 ♗xb4 cxb4 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♘bd2 d6 10 ♕b3 a5 11 a3**

Natural and fairly critical play from Grischuk, forcing Black to weaken his queenside.

**11...♘a6 12 ♖fd1 ♕e7 13 ♘e1!**

And this is another fine, thematic choice, robbing Black's set-up of some dynamism with the exchange of bishops, while bringing the knight round to c2 to increase the pressure.

**13...♗xg2 14 ♔xg2**

This seemingly consistent follow-up was actually a novelty, White having earlier preferred 14 ♘xg2, including in Karpov-Korchnoi, Amsterdam 1987, where 14...♖fd8 15 ♘e3 ♕e8 16 ♕d3 e5? 17 ♘e4! ♘xe4 18 ♕xe4 saw Black running into serious difficulties.

**14...h5!?**

Giri hints at obtaining some kingside counterplay. The alternative was to hunker down with something like 14...♖fc8 15 ♘c2 bxa3 16 bxa3 ♖ab8 when White undoubtedly has an edge, but Black might hope to get ...♘c7 and ...b5 or ...d5 in.

**15 ♘c2 bxa3 16 bxa3 ♖ab8 17 e4 e5!**

The thematic central counterstrike. Black hasn't fully equalised, but his position is clearly acceptable enough.

**18 ♕d3 ♘c7!?**

Heading for e6 and possibly a sign that Giri hoped to gradually outmanoeuvre Grischuk or at least didn't yet want to simplify with 18...exd4 19 ♕xd4 ♘c5 20 f3 b5.

**19 ♖ab1**

19 dxe5!? dxe5 20 ♘e3 ♘a6 21 ♘d5 may well be an edge, despite Black's outpost on c5.

**19...♘e6 20 ♖b5 ♖fe8**

This feels a little slow and 20...h4! 21 ♘f3 ♕b7 was probably the critical line when Black may well have enough counterplay.

**21 h4**

Finally halting the black h-pawn and now Giri once again faced a big decision: to exchange or not to exchange?

**21...g6**

Both sides have some serious weaknesses after 21...exd4! 22 ♘xd4 ♘c5 (and not 22...♘xd4? 23 ♕xd4 ♘xe4? 24 ♖e1) 23 ♕f3 ♕d7, but after, say, 24 ♘f5 g6! 25 ♘e3 ♔g7 Black should have sufficient counterplay against e4 to maintain a rough balance.

**22 f3 ♘d7**

It's suddenly not so easy to find a good move for Black. Now after 22...exd4? 23 ♘xd4 ♘c5 24 ♕e3 he is undoubtedly suffering with e4 secure and ♕f4 on its way, which may be why the engines propose 22...♖ec8! with the idea of ...♘c7 and ...b5.

**23 ♘f1!**

Grischuk is no slouch when it comes to manoeuvring and now Black pretty much has to release the tension before this knight lands on d5.

**23...exd4 24 ♘xd4 ♘e5?!**

Another step in the wrong direction. Black's position would have been quite ugly after 24...♘xd4 25 ♕xd4 ♖bc8! 26 ♘e3 ♖c6, but at least it's very solid and probably White is no more than slightly for choice here.

**25 ♕e2**

Giri would later admit to having underestimated this simple retreat, adding that "It was a very poor game. I think it was the combination of a mindset that does not suit the position [i.e. wanting to play for a win] and a heavy lack of understanding. I made a lot of terrible mistakes."

**25...♘xd4 26 ♖xd4 ♘c6?**

Continuing to drift. Black needed to ignore the hole on d5, try to provoke f3-f4 and challenge on the queenside with 26...♖ec8 27 ♘e3 ♖c5!.

**27 ♖d1 ♕e6 28 ♘e3**

Suddenly White has everything he could dream of: c4 is secure, unlike d6 and b6, and Black is rather low on counterplay.

**28...♘e7**

Desperately trying to keep White out of d5 while preparing ...f5. That was possible straight away, but after 28...f5 29 ♕d2! fxe4 30 f4! Black would suddenly have found his kingside, as well as d6, a definite target, with ♖g5 high on White's agenda. Instead, 28...♘e5!? 29 ♖bd5 ♖bd8 30 ♕d2 ♕f6 31 f4 ♘c6 would undoubtedly have left Black suffering somewhat after 32 ♕d3, but might still have been a better try, as pointed out by the engines and commentators alike.

**29 ♕d2 f5?**

Making matters easy for White, although 29...♖ed8 would have been well met by 30 ♕d3 and f3-f4, or even 30 g4!? hxg4 31 ♘xg4 when White suddenly obtains a venomous attack.

**30 ♕xd6 ♘c6 31 exf5!**

Even while beginning to run slightly low on time, Grischuk was unsurprisingly able to calculate that 31...♕xe3? 32 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 33 f6 ♖b7 34 ♖xh5 would give White a mating attack.

**31...gxf5 32 ♕xe6+ ♖xe6 33 ♘xf5**

There goes a second pawn and, unfortunately for Dutch fans, Grischuk wasn't to slip up or take any real risks in the run-up to move 40.

**33...♘e5 34 ♖d6 ♖ee8 35 ♖d4 ♘c6 36 ♖d2 ♖bd8 37 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 38 ♖d5! ♖xd5 39 cxd5 ♘e5 40 ♘d6**

A fine post for the knight, denying Black any real counterplay. Next White will activate his king and the game and tournament were clearly up for Giri.

**40...♔f8 41 ♔f2 ♔e7 42 ♘b5 ♔f6 43 ♔e3 ♔f5 44 ♘d6+ ♔f6 45 ♔e4 ♘d7 46 ♔d4 ♔e7 47 ♘b5 ♔f6 48 ♘c3 ♔f5 49 ♘e4!**

*A damaged wrist was never going to prevent Alexander Grischuk from entertaining the vast online audience, running low on time in almost every game - and scoring a huge win over Giri.*

Continuing to take squares from Black's pieces. Something is about to have to give.

**49...♔g6 50 g4 b5 51 ♘c5 1-0**

That left Nepomniachtchi a point clear and – qualified. While he could still be caught by Giri, the tournament rules only required a play-off if the three tiebreaks failed, and the first tiebreak was individual results. Nepomniachtchi had, of course, defeated Giri in a dramatic game in the very first round last March (see the May 2020 *CHESS*).

Reflecting on his success, Nepomniachtchi realised that "It's a huge milestone in my career and perhaps in my life", before adding that he was "Extremely tired. It was one year of thinking about this tournament, one year of preparation." He also made sure to thank his team, which consisted of not just regular second Vladimir Potkin, but Peter Leko no less, as well as Ildar Khairullin and Nikita Vitiugov.

Elsewhere, Caruana salvaged some pride as he overcame Wang Hao on the black side of a rather turgid c3 Sicilian. Not for the first time, Wang would drift somewhat, although he only really blew things on move 40. Poor Alekseenko must also have been rather fed up by this point, outplaying Ding Liren no less to go two pawns ahead before being swindled when a piece up in the endgame.

## Nothing at Stake

Final rounds tend to be rather strange affairs when there's nothing to play for and just because the 14th round marked 400 days since the players had first kicked off in Yekaterinburg (surely a world record for the longest ever tournament), didn't make things any different.

Caruana went for another early ♕d3 in a Sicilian (1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 6 ♕d3!?), but despite being granted some chances by Grischuk's time-trouble failed to grind down the Muscovite, who generally defended well. That was something which Giri was unusually unable to do after stumbling into a slightly worse position against Alekseenko, who eventually brought home his second full point after a number of adventures.

A thoroughly demoralised and possibly ill Wang Hao meanwhile collapsed as Black in a Berlin against Vachier-Lagrave, who thereby bounced back to finish second. After that debacle, Wang would stun the chess world by announcing his retirement on health grounds, and even Nepomniachtchi's on-top-of-the-world feeling must have been dented slightly by a final round reversal.

**Ding Liren-I.Nepomniachtchi**
Round 14
*Modern Benoni*

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 f3**

Ding's favourite anti-Grünfeld line and the new world championship challenger now elected to head for Benoni waters.

**3...e6 4 e4 c5 5 d5 d6 6 ♗d3!?**

The two had been here before, with 6 ♘c3 exd5 7 cxd5 ♗g7 8 ♘ge2 0-0 9 ♘g3 a6 10 a4 ♘bd7 11 ♗e2 ♘e8 12 0-0 ♖b8 13 ♖e1 ♗d4+ 14 ♔h1 ♕h4 15 ♖f1! a standard Sämisch which was typically unclear in Ding Liren-Nepomniachtchi, Internet (blitz) 2019.

**6...♗g7 7 ♘e2 exd5 8 cxd5 ♘bd7 9 ♘ec3**

A novelty, if the modern take on such positions. White deploys this knight to c3,

hoping that the queen's knight will be able to take up a fine post on c4. Nepomniachtchi moves quickly to counter such plans.

**9...a6 10 a4 ♘h5!? 11 0-0 ♗d4+**

11...0-0 is by no means ridiculous and may be seen in any future tests, and it's not totally impossible that Black might also consider a typical Benoni counter to seize some dark squares in 11...g5!?.

**12 ♔h1 ♘e5 13 ♘e2**

It makes good sense to challenge the mighty bishop on d4. 13 ♗c2!? is preferred by the fearless *Stockfish* when 13...0-0 (if 13...♕h4 14 ♕e1!) 14 ♘e2 f5!? 15 ♘xd4 cxd4 16 ♕xd4 f4 followed by ...g5-g4 should at least offer Black decent compensation from a practical perspective.

**13...♕h4!**

Consistent with his early ambition, whereas 13...♘xd3?! 14 ♕xd3 ♗g7 15 ♘d2 0-0 16 ♘c4 would have left White in control.

**14 ♘xd4! ♘xd3?**

Black will regret taking the exchange. Nepomniachtchi later suggested that he had mixed up his lines and presumably 14...cxd4! was in his very detailed preparation when absolutely anything might be happening after 15 ♔g1 g5!, with the engines calmly displaying their beloved '0.00'.

**15 ♕xd3 ♘g3+ 16 ♔g1 ♘xf1 17 ♘c2!**

A powerful intermezzo.

**17...♘xh2 18 ♕e3 0-0?**

Black's knight is trapped and he is chronically weak on the dark squares. Not a good combination against such a strong opponent as Ding. Here Nepomniachtchi really needed to find 18...g5! when at least matters would have been quite messy if still clearly better for White after 19 e5! ♔f8 20 exd6 ♗f5 21 ♘ba3 f6 .

*Crowned with laurel, but we suspect Ian Nepomniachtchi will receive an even bigger wreath if he pulls off an upset and defeats Magnus Carlsen in Dubai in November and December.*

**19 ♕g5! ♘xf3+ 20 gxf3 ♕h3**

It's all too easy as well for White after 20...♕xg5+ 21 ♗xg5 f6 22 ♗f4 ♖d8 23 ♘d2.

**21 ♗f4 ♕xf3 22 ♘d2 f6 23 ♕xg6+ hxg6 24 ♘xf3 ♗g4 25 ♘d2!**

Keeping e4 defended and remaining en route for c4. Ding made it look easy from here.

**25...♗e2 26 ♔f2 ♗d3 27 ♘e1 c4 28 ♗xd6 ♖fe8 29 ♘xd3 cxd3 30 ♗c7 ♔f7 31 ♖a3 ♖ac8 32 d6 ♔e6 33 ♖xd3 ♔d7 34 ♘c4 ♖xc7 35 ♘b6+! 1-0**

It's all over after 35...♔c6 36 dxc7 ♔xb6 37 ♖d8.

While it must have been hard for Nepomniachtchi to play the day after learning that he'd won the tournament, such a quick disaster as Black may well give Team Carlsen plenty of hope. Come November and the big match, will we see Magnus avoiding theory and going for long grinds or taking his Russian challenger on with the aid of some serious bombs in Nepomniachtchi's favourite lines?

Having just won three in a row, Ding Liren was left to rue "What a pity that the tournament is over" and didn't seem keen on making a prediction about Carlsen-Nepomniachtchi. However, he did point out that "Ian has a different style than Magnus, so it will depend on if he can get the positions he likes and Magnus doesn't." Roll on the match!

**FIDE Candidates Tournament – Yekaterinburg, Russia, 15 March 2020 - 28 April 2021 (Category 21, average rating = 2774 Elo)**

| | Player | Rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Pts | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ian Nepomniachtchi | 2789 | *** | ½ 0 | ½ 1 | ½ ½ | 1 0 | ½ ½ | 1 ½ | 1 1 | 8½ | 2849 |
| 2 | Maxime Vachier-Lagrave | 2758 | 1 ½ | *** | ½ ½ | ½ 0 | 1 ½ | ½ 0 | 1 ½ | 1 ½ | 8 | 2824 |
| 3 | Anish Giri | 2776 | 0 ½ | ½ ½ | *** | ½ 1 | 1 ½ | ½ 0 | 0 1 | 1 ½ | 7½ | 2799 |
| 4 | Fabiano Caruana | 2820 | ½ ½ | ½ 1 | 0 ½ | *** | ½ 0 | ½ ½ | 1 ½ | ½ 1 | 7½ | 2789 |
| 5 | Ding Liren | 2791 | 1 0 | ½ 0 | ½ 0 | 1 ½ | *** | 1 ½ | 1 ½ | 0 ½ | 7 | 2769 |
| 6 | Alexander Grischuk | 2777 | ½ ½ | 1 ½ | 1 ½ | ½ ½ | ½ 0 | *** | ½ 0 | ½ ½ | 7 | 2773 |
| 7 | Kirill Alekseenko | 2696 | ½ 0 | ½ 0 | 0 1 | ½ 0 | 0 ½ | 1 ½ | *** | ½ ½ | 5½ | 2708 |
| 8 | Wang Hao | 2763 | 0 0 | ½ 0 | ½ 0 | 0 ½ | 1 ½ | ½ ½ | ½ ½ | *** | 5 | 2664 |

# Inspiring new titles from Chess Informant

**Chess Informant**
SINCE 1966

**Chess Informant books are available from sahovski.com and London Chess Centre chess.co.uk**

# How Good is Your Chess?

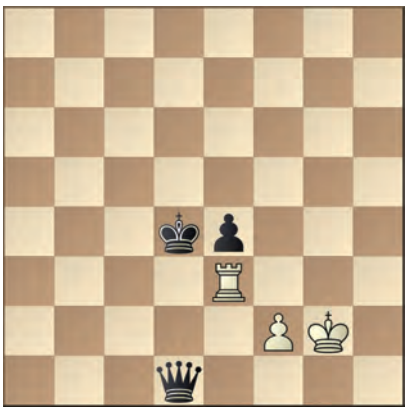
## by Grandmaster Daniel King

The most exciting tournament in the chess calendar has concluded and we have a challenger: Ian Nepomniachtchi will face Magnus Carlsen for the world title in November. This has already been billed as a contest between players with markedly different styles, but once both Champion and Challenger have fully filled the frontal cortex with opening variations, those differences will be smoothed over. Nevertheless, I am far more excited by this contest than a repeat of the Carlsen-Caruana match, given Nepomniachtchi's speed of play and his brilliance, as well as his unevenness.

Was this unevenness on display in Yekaterinburg? We need to discount the anti-climactic defeat in the last round, and there was a defeat by Vachier-Lagrave in round 7. Apart from that, Nepo was steady. That's why he won the tournament: his wins were gained by fine middlegame and endgame technique, and his play overall had that vital quality of 'grit' that pulled him through some difficult moments.

Take his first-round game against Giri: he was caught in some devilish opening preparation, but found a way to safety and even turned the game around, winning with fluent, speedy and impressive endgame technique. This was the finish:

**A.Giri-I.Nepomniachtchi**
Round 1



**73...♕d3** forced resignation. If 74 ♖xd3 exd3 and the pawn rolls home with the help of the king, and if the queen isn't taken the king strolls in via c3.

**F.Caruana-I.Nepomniachtchi**
Round 4

This is very unpleasant. Caruana has created two typical advantages from this Grünfeld: the passed d-pawn, and the embedded pawn on h6, setting up mating nets and turning the h7-pawn into a target. Difficult to defend, but Nepo succeeded with **30...♔f8!**. Caruana followed with **31 ♕f3**, but that came to nothing after **31...♕e1+ 32 ♔g2 f5!**, taking away options for White's queen.

Another Grünfeld also saw him under pressure:

**A.Grischuk-I.Nepomniachtchi**
Round 9

Nepo had the self-confidence to suffer with a couple of defensive moves: **16...♖b8** (it takes guts to play passively like this) **17 fxe5 ♕xe5 18 ♕f4 ♕xf4 19 ♖xf4 ♖e8 20 ♗b5 ♖d8 21 ♖bf1 ♗d7!** – this tactic had to be seen well in advance, and he held the position.

I could go on – but you'll recognise this gritty quality if you play through more of Nepomniachtchi's games from the Candidates.

In his superb commentary sessions on Chess 24, Magnus Carlsen mentioned that Nepomniachtchi had once complained to him that he wasn't getting invitations to the big tournaments. Magnus pointed out his inconsistency: the highs were always very high, but he needed to eliminate the poor results. Ian revealed that over the past few years he has been working harder on his chess than ever before, and it has certainly paid off in his results. In May 2016 he was rated 2703 and no.40 in the world; he is now 2789 and no.4 in the world. Hard work is a talent. Don't forget that in December 2020 Nepo won the Russian Championship (played over-the-board and with a classical time limit): his Candidates performance did not come out of the blue.

There will be time over the next few months to assess the players' chances, but for the moment let me take you back a few years to a daring and original attacking game.

Begin after the first diagram. Whenever Black has moved, stop and try to guess White's reply which will be on the next line. Try to analyse as much as you would in a game – it could earn you bonus points. The article will test your standard of play or, if you prefer, just enjoy a fine game.

**I.Nepomniachtchi-E.Bacrot**
Batumi Olympiad 2018
*Reti Opening*

**1 ♘f3 d5 2 e3 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 b3 0-0 6 ♗b2 c5**

**7 cxd5**

*Three points*. Sooner or later White has to resolve matters in the centre, otherwise Black will push forward with ...d4.

The other way of meeting Black's 'threat' of ...d4 is to play 7 d4 (*three points*), transposing into a kind of Queen's Indian. This could very well turn into a classic 'hanging pawns' position after 7...cxd4 8 exd4 (it's also possible to steer the game towards much calmer waters with 8 ♘xd4) 8...♘c6 9 ♗d3 dxc4 10 bxc4 b6 11 0-0 ♗b7. And instead of 9...bxc4, there is the famous game Keres-Smyslov, Zurich 1953: 9...b6 10 0-0 ♗b7 11 ♖c1 ♖c8 12 ♖e1 ♘b4 13 ♗f1 ♘e4 14 a3 ♘xc3 15 ♖xc3 ♘c6 16 ♘e5 ♘xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♗f6 18 ♖h5 g6 19 ♖ch3 – and so on.

**7...♘xd5**

As is so often the case, these choices over the first few moves are very much a matter of taste. If you like playing with an Isolated Queen's Pawn, then 7...exd5 is the move: 8 d4 ♘c6 9 ♗e2 ♗g4 10 dxc5 ♗xc5 11 0-0...and so on (Nepomniachtchi-Nyzhnyk, Internet (rapid) 2020). It's funny how this pawn structure still divides opinion. I know some decent players who religiously avoid one side or the other believing them to be fundamentally unsound, reliving ideological battles from the era of Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch. Personally, I've always been happy on both sides of this position; it just depends where the pieces are and who moves first.

**8 h4**

*Four points*. A new move at the time this game was played, but the h-pawn advance is a fairly standard idea in this system. This is modern chess.

For example, 8 ♕c2 (*four points*) 8...♘c6 9 h4 was played in the game Karjakin-Anand, Candidates 2016 – an important victory for the Russian on his way to challenging Carlsen for the world title.

8 ♕b1 (*four points*) has a similar idea – to claim an important diagonal and attack on the kingside – and has been successful in a few games. The advantage of moving to b1 instead of c2 is that the queen is out of the range of Black's knights.

8 ♘xd5 (*two points*) was employed by Botvinnik in a couple of games, including one which is recognised as a classic of middlegame strategy: 8...exd5 9 d4 cxd4 (alternatively, 9 ..♕a5+ 10 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 11 ♔xd2 ♘c6 12 dxc5 ♗xc5 13 ♗b5, Carlsen-Giri, Wijk aan Zee (play-off) 2018 finally ended in a smooth endgame victory for the world champion) 10 ♕xd4 ♗f6 11 ♕d2 ♘c6 12 ♗e2 ♗e6 13 0-0 ♗xb2 14 ♕xb2 ♕a5 15 ♖fd1 ♖ad8 16 ♖d2 ♖d7 17 ♖ad1, Botvinnik-Zagoriansky, Sverdlovsk 1943.

It's curious going through these lines how many classic games have arisen from these variations. Play through them and you will have a fantastic chess education!

8 ♗e2 (*two points*) is much tamer, but quite sensible. White can decide later whether to push the d-pawn or play elsewhere.

**8...b6**

**9 ♕b1**

*Four points*. Having started with a wacky ruse on the kingside, White needs to follow consistently, and this queen slide is all about the attack. This is a safer square than c2.

9 ♕c2 (no points) runs into 9...♘b4 10 ♕b1 ♗a6 and Black is getting close to landing a piece on d3.

9 h5 misses the point. The pawn can simply be blocked (9...h6), and it is hard for White to get the attack going.

**9...h6**

The position is already perilous for Black and this seemingly safe move isn't necessarily best.

Look what can happen to the standard developing move 9...♘c6. We have transposed to So-Caruana, Bucharest 2019 (blitz): 10 ♗b5 ♕c7 11 h5 h6 12 ♖h3 ♗d7 13 ♖g3 f6 14 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 15 ♕g6+ ♔h8 16 ♕xh6+ ♔g8 17 ♕g6+ ♔h8 18 ♗d3 1-0. No messing around. That's not far off what happens in our main game...

**10 g4**

*Four points*. The pawn on h6 gives White something to bite on. Such flank advances usually only work when White has a space advantage in the centre (for example, against the King's Indian or sometimes in the Sicilian). This case is different: White has a modest but strong central shell (d2, e3, f2), and controls the key diagonals across the centre.

10 ♘g5 (*two points*) is also worth considering. 10...hxg5 11 hxg5 gives White a strong attack. Likewise, 10...♗xg5 11 hxg5 ♕xg5 12 ♖h3 provides decent compensation in the form of the two bishops. 10...f5! is the best response, blocking the diagonal, although White certainly has some gaps to aim at.

10 ♖h3 (*two points*), with the idea of ♖g3, is challenging for Black to face, although there is a danger of the rook becoming sidelined. Once again, 10...f5 is the best response.

10 ♗d3 (*one point*), taking control over the diagonal is impressive, but compared to the game there is no breakthrough in sight.

**10...♗b7**

**11 ♖h3**

*Three points*. Protecting the knight and removing the rook from the beam of the bishop on b7.

11 ♗e2 (*one point*) is slower, but reasonable.

11 ♗g2 does not work as well because of 11...♘b4 taking control over the d3-square. 11 g5? loses a piece: 11...♘xc3 12 ♗xc3 ♗xf3.

**11...♘d7**

**12 g5**

*Three points*. Having launched the kingside pawns, White should be consistent. The most important thing is to maintain the pressure.

**12...h5**

Black has to keep the position as closed as possible. Capturing on g5 and opening the h-file would be suicidal.

**13 ♗d3**

*Three points*. The bishop claims a powerful diagonal.

13 g6 (*three points*) is a good alternative, compromising Black's pawn structure. Black has to respond with 13...f5 and then 14 ♕d1 is dangerous, although 14...♘7f6 holds everything together – for the time being.

**13...♘b4**

As we will soon see, this is a mistake. Then again, what would you play instead? This is a treacherous position.

Computers believe that Black should play 13...♘xc3 14 ♗xc3 ♕c7, although that is far from obvious, and, in any case, the position remains unstable on the kingside.

**14 ♗h7+**

*Seven points*. A crafty check that pushes the king to a very unfortunate square.

14 ♗e4 (no points) doesn't work in the

same way – more on that soon!

14 ♗e2 is too tame.

14 ♗c4? runs into 14...♗xf3 15 ♖xf3 ♘e5 16 ♖g3 ♘xc4 17 bxc4 ♕d3 and the game has turned in Black's favour. Likewise, 14 ♗b5? ♗xf3 15 ♖xf3 ♘e5 followed by a check on d3.

**14...♔h8**

**15 ♗e4**

*Four points.* The bishop cannot live on h7, nor does it want to. With this move, White prevents ...♗xf3.

**15...♘d5**

A shameful retreat. Bacrot admits that his foray with the knight was useless. He has only lost time.

Let's have a quick look at the consequences of 15...♗xe4 16 ♘xe4 and here if Black plays the casual 16...♕c7, 17 a3 ♘c6 18 ♘g3 wins the h-pawn: the pinning bishop on b2 prevents the pawn from moving to g6. There are plenty of other variations where the poor position of the king on h8 has a disastrous effect on Black's position.

**16 ♘e2**

*Four points.* Uncovering the bishop on b2 and looking to spin to the kingside.

Instinctively, I dislike 16 ♘xd5 exd5 17 ♗f5, as it gives Black the chance to block the long diagonal with ...d4.

**16...f5?**

A move of panic. Black's kingside position was shaky, but still a long way from being lost.

Instead, how would you meet 16...♔g8? Answer on the next line.

That one also isn't terribly good: 17 ♘g3 wins the h-pawn as 17...g6 runs into 18 ♗xg6 (*two points* if you got this far).

The best move is 16...♗d6, so as to eliminate the knight: 17 ♘g3 ♗xg3 18 ♖xg3. This is highly unpleasant – one false move and Black could lose – but it isn't yet game over.

**17 gxf6**

*Three points.* Open up the kingside. Black voluntarily unlocked the gates to the fortress, and White just needs to swing them open.

17 ♗xd5 (*two points*) was also quite good: 17...♗xd5 18 ♘f4, though Black can hang on with 18...♕e8. White has a huge positional advantage after 19 ♘e5 ♘xe5 20 ♗xe5, followed by ♕b2. How does Black shake White's grip on the dark squares?

**17...♘7xf6**

Instead, 17...gxf6 18 ♘g5 followed by ♗xd5 ends the game.

**18 ♘g5**

*Three points.* Same story. The knight sets up potent mating threats.

18 ♘e5 (*one point*) is promising too, but 18...♘xe4 19 ♕xe4 ♔g8 hangs on.

18 ♗g6 (*one point*) is also good.

**18...♘xe4**

**19 ♕xe4**

*One point.* Mate in one threatened.

**19...♗xg5**

**20 hxg5**

*One point.* The dream scenario for the h-pawn strategy: the file opens for the rook.

**20...♘f4**

Instead, if 20...♕xg5, what should White play? Answer on the next line.

*A point* for 21 ♖g3 and g7 caves in.

**21 ♕xb7**

*Four points.* The best way forward: mate is threatened on g7.

Instead, 21 ♗xg7+ (*two points*) is a bit messier than one would like: 21...♔g8 (21...♔xg7? 22 ♕e5+ ♔g8 23 ♘xf4 is easy) 22 ♕xb7 ♘d3+ 23 ♔f1 ♖xf2+ 24 ♔g1 ♖f7 25 ♕c6 ♔xg7. White should be winning, but there is no need to go in for this. Compare with the incisive game continuation.

**21...♘d3+**

**22 ♔f1**

*Three points.* This just needs a little calculation.

It is still not too late to blow everything: 22 ♔d1?? ♘xb2+ 23 ♔c2 ♕d3+ 24 ♔xb2 ♕xd2+ 25 ♔a3 (25 ♔b1 ♕xe2 wins for Black) 25...♕a5+, forcing a draw.

**22...♘xb2**

22...♖xf2+ doesn't get very far: 23 ♔g1 ♕xg5+ 24 ♖g3 and g7 caves in; and if 22...♕xg5...? Easy: 23 ♖xh5+ ♕xh5 24 ♕xg7 mate.

**23 ♖xh5+**

*One point.*

**23...♔g8**

**24 g6 1-0**

*Three points.* Threatening the classic sacrifice ♖h8+ and the queen lands on h7 via the check on h1. 24...♖f6 parries that, but the routine 25 ♕h1 wins the queen: 25...♖xg6 26 ♖h8+. A fitting conclusion for the strategy initiated by 8 h4.

I doubt whether we will see games of exactly that ilk in November, but it shows that, given half a chance, Nepo is not afraid to attack.

**Now add up your points**:

| | |
|---|---|
| 0-15 | Unlucky |
| 16-30 | Average Club Player |
| 31-38 | Strong Club Player |
| 39-44 | FIDE Master |
| 45-51 | International Master |
| 52-61 | Grandmaster |

*Ed. – If you have any questions regarding this article, please contact Daniel directly through his website www.danielking.biz.*

# 60 Seconds with...

# Rosie Irwin

**Born:** 22nd June 1993, London.

**Place of residence:** Swansea, Wales.

**Occupation:** I was a dental nurse, but sadly made redundant in the first lockdown.

**Enjoyable?** Nope. I just want to get back to work ASAP.

**And home life?** Great. I live on my own with Charlie, my cat. No 'mad cat lady' Simpsons jokes, please.

**Sports played or followed:** I used to do karate, so I can take care of myself.

**A favourite novel?** *Me Before You*. It's a book about a man who is quadruplegic and his carer. They end up falling in love, etc.

**Piece of music?** Anything by Sting. Every little thing he does is magic...

**Film or TV Series?** Film – *The Green Mile*. No! I really shouldn't say that given the title of our new book. Guess I have to say *The Queen's Gambit*, which is awesome to be fair.

**What's the best thing about playing chess?** It keeps the brain active and there's always a challenge. It's never too easy. Not yet, at least.

**And the worst?** Losing. Losing multiple times in a row.

**Your best move?** I think a deflection.

**Worst move?** Getting my bishops trapped and falling into pawn forks. I don't blunder as much as I used to, though.

**Favourite game of all time?** Has to be the king walk in Short-Timman, Tilburg 1991.

**N.Short-J.Timman**
Tilburg 1991
*Alekhine's Defence*

**31 ♔h2! ♖c8 32 ♔g3 ♖ce8 33 ♔f4! ♗c8 34 ♔g5 1-0**

**The best three chess books?** Never read any. I've literally written more chess books than I've read. Honestly, I've learned mainly from Jonathan coaching me and from watching YouTubers such as Anna Rudolf and GothamChess.

**Any advice for the ECF?** As a new player, literally the only reason I know about any OTB competitions coming up is because I happened to be friends with Jonathan. How many online players don't even know that they exist? Converting them to OTB players is a real challenge I imagine, and you need to put a huge amount of effort into finding who they are. Maybe reach out on chess.com, Lichess, etc?

**Can chess make one happy?** Yes, at least temporarily, especially with a satisfying win.

**A tip please for new players:** Look at the entire board the entire time. Don't just focus on one part. Look around you.

*Ed.:* The Queen's Gambit – Accepted! *by Rosie Irwin and Jonathan Arnott is out now and available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £12.99 or just £11.79 for Subscribers.*

# Find the Winning Moves

**24 puzzles to test your tactical ability, with, as ever, the positions grouped in rough order of difficulty. The games come mainly from various recent tournaments, not least the Israeli Championships and 4NCL Online League. Don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force mate or the win of material, other times it will just win a pawn.**

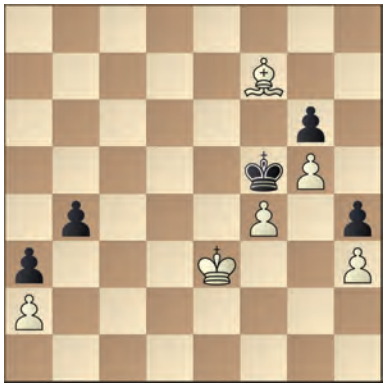
**Solutions on pages 53.**

## Warm-up Puzzles

**(1) S.Brady-D.Shafi**
4NCL Online League 2021
*White to Play*

**(2) K.Venkatesan-J.Fletcher**
4NCL Online League 2021
*White to Play*

**(3) A.Firouzja-V.Artemiev**
Chess.com Bullet Championship 2021
*White to Play and Draw*



**(4) A.Samimi-M.Alizadeh**
Iranian Online Rapid Championship 2021
*Black to Play and Draw*

**(5) M.Katkov-M.Lian**
Israeli Women's Championship, Haifa 2021
*White to Play*

**(6) NN-D.Lawson**
Internet (blitz) 2021
*Black to Play*

## Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 53

**(7) A.Lenderman-G.Guseinov**
U.S. Online Rapids 2021
*White to Play*

**(8) D.Corr-K.Milligan**
Internet 2021
*White to Play*

**(9) A.Pyda-C.Sielecki**
4NCL Online League 2021
*Black to Play*

**(10) S.Whitehead-'BenyaminGz'**
Internet (blitz) 2021
*White to Play*

**(11) A.Giri-I.Nepomniachtchi**
Magnus Carlsen Invitational 2021
*White to Play*

**(12) M.Roberts-B.Savage**
4NCL Online League 2021
*White to Play*

**(13) Y.Ben Ari-G.Rechlis**
Israeli Championship, Haifa 2021
*White to Play*

**(14) A.Haitovich-R.Levitan**
Israeli Women's Championship, Haifa 2021
*White to Play*

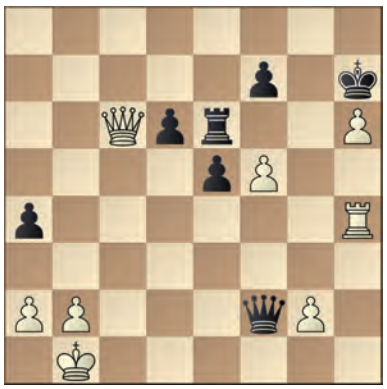
**(15) C.Wheeler-H.Gabuzyan**
Pan-Am Online Intercollegiate 2021
*White to Play*

## Harder Puzzles for the Club Player – Solutions on page 53

**(16) M.Carlsen-W.So**
Magnus Carlsen Invitational 2021
*White to Play*

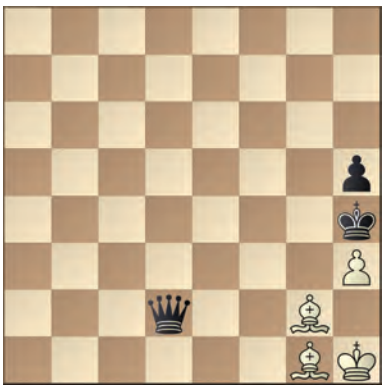
**(17) R.Wojtaszek-M.Matlakov**
European Online Club Cup 2021
*White to Play and Draw*

**(18) F.Perez Ponsa-V.Gunina**
Titled Tuesday (online blitz) 2021
*Black to Play*

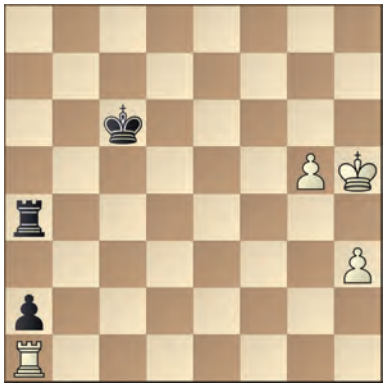


**(19) Y.Ben Ari-E.Kupervaser**
Israeli Championship, Haifa 2021
*Black to Play*

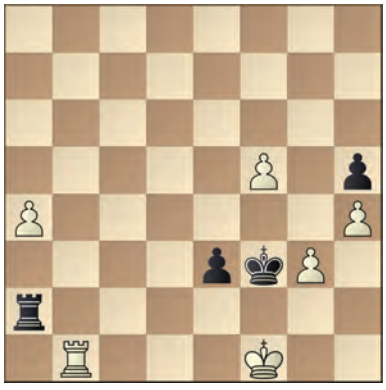
**(20) O.Idle-R.Freeman**
4NCL Online League 2021
*White to Play*



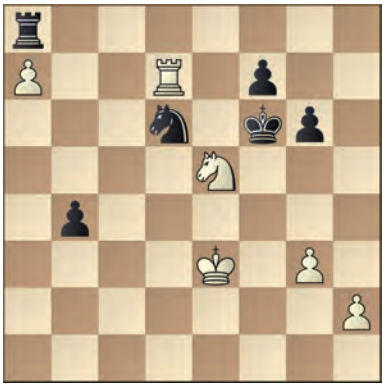
**(21) N.Grandelius-V.Mikhalevski**
European Online Club Cup 2021
*Black to Play*



**(22) W.So-A.Firouzja**
Magnus Carlsen Invitational 2021
*Black to Play and Draw*

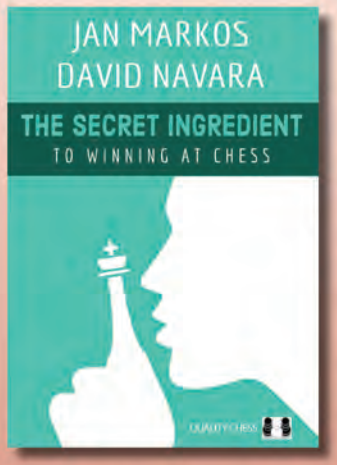


**(23) F.Gordon-K.Arkell**
ECF Online Rapid Grand Prix 2021
*Black to Play*



**(24) S.Vidit-S.Mamedyarov**
European Online Club Cup 2021
*White to Play*

# Stunning new books from Quality Chess



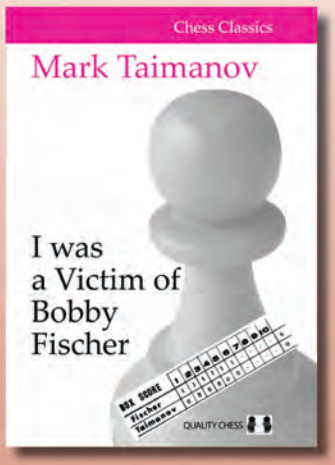

## The Secret Ingredient

A grandmaster guide to maximizing your chess results, focusing on key elements of practical play which have received little to no attention in previous chess literature.

**GM Jan Markos** sheds light on a range of topics, helped by the world-class insights of his good friend **GM David Navara**.

## I was a Victim of Bobby Fischer

In 1971 Bobby Fischer defeated Mark Taimanov by the sensational score of 6–0, but the match games were far more competitive than the final score would suggest. Twenty years later **GM Taimanov** put pen to paper, providing the ultimate insight into one of the most famous matches in chess history.



## Leningrad Dutch – Volumes 1&2

The Leningrad Dutch is renowned as a fighting weapon which immediately sets up an unbalanced struggle. Black's kingside fianchetto allows pawn-storming play in similar style to the King's Indian Defence. **Leningrad Dutch** covers lines where White *also* opts for a kingside fianchetto. The companion volume, **Dutch Sidelines**, completes Black's Dutch repertoire.

**GM Mihail Marin**, whose previous books for Quality Chess have established him as one of the world's finest chess authors, is ideally qualified to explain both the strategic ideas and the latest theory.

**Quality Chess books are available from**

# QUALITYCHESS.CO.UK

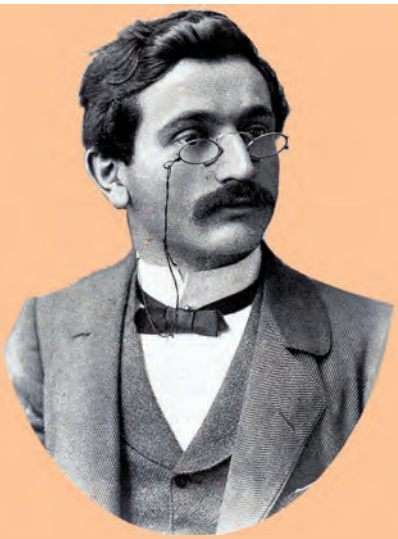
**The London Chess Centre and other specialist chess retailers**

## KillerChessTraining.com

**The Best Coaches**
**The Best Prices**

# Rest in Peace

**IM Yury Lapshun and FM Jon Jacobs take a look at the final resting places of world champions William Steinitz and Emanuel Lasker**



**Emanuel Lasker**
**1868-1941**
*Second World Champion*
Buried in the Beth Olam Cemetery, Queens, New York

## WHERE LEGENDS LIE

*Born thousands of miles away in Europe, the first two world chess champions now reside in cemeteries in New York just one mile apart.*

**William Steinitz**
**1836-1900**
*First World Champion*
Buried in the Cemetery of the Evergreens in Brooklyn, New York

When people entertain 'American' and 'World Chess Champion' in the same breath, the first name that springs to mind is Bobby Fischer. Those whose chess knowledge extends further back in time will also think of Paul Morphy. Others, attuned to the immediate past and America's hopes for the future, may think of Fabiano Caruana, or perhaps Hikaru Nakamura or Jeffrey Xiong.

It may come as a surprise, then, that the very first two recognised world chess champions lived out their final years in the United States and are buried in New York City, within a mere mile of each other. In fact, the first champion, William Steinitz, was a U.S. citizen not only upon his death in 1900, but while contesting five of his six official world title matches.

Steinitz made a permanent move to New York from London in 1883 and became a naturalised citizen five years later. His successor as champion, Emanuel Lasker, resided in New York from 1892-94 (during which time he wrested the title from Steinitz), again from 1902-1911, and again for the final years of his life, from 1937-1941, after fleeing from Nazi Germany and later leaving the Soviet Union.

England, too, played an important role in the lives of both champions. Although raised in Jewish families in Central Europe separated by more than 30 years, both Steinitz and Lasker not only competed in numerous English tournaments and matches, but at various times: lived and worked in England; wrote regularly about chess for English periodicals; and returned for the last hurrah of their chess careers – London 1899 for Steinitz, Nottingham 1936 for Lasker.

Their final resting places are situated in separate but adjacent cemeteries that straddle the dividing line between the New York boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens. Although the cemeteries are easy to locate, it is a challenge to find one's way to the graves themselves. The cemetery maps do not display individual grave locations. We have prepared this article to assist readers who when visiting New York may wish to pay their respects to two giants of chess history.

### Steinitz's Grave

Steinitz's grave is marked by a box-shaped headstone whose flat summit is decorated by an etched-in chessboard, as if in death he hoped to test his famous aphorism that even God couldn't defeat him.

Evergreen Cemetery, where Steinitz lies, sprawls across 225 acres and houses the remains of a half-million people. Opened in 1850, it is non-denominational and is divided into sections for various religions and ethnic groups. Steinitz's grave is in a section called Bethel Slope.

The main entrance gate is situated at 1629 Bushwick Avenue at Conway Street, Brooklyn, near the northern terminus of Eastern Parkway and the southern terminus of the Jackie Robinson Parkway. The grounds are open from 8am to 4:30pm daily. The cemetery office is open from 8 to 4:30 on weekdays, from 9 to 1pm on Saturdays, and is closed Sundays.

The nearest major subway station is Broadway Junction, served by the A, C, J, and L lines. Leave the station via the Van Sinderen Avenue exit, walk left a short distance to Broadway and bear left, then take the first right on to Conway Street. After ascending one long block to Bushwick Avenue, you will see the entrance gate.

Inside, continue up the main road until you see a grey stone chapel that houses the cemetery office in front and rest rooms around the back. Bear left, passing the chapel/office on your right and a gazebo-like structure and Chinese headstones on your left. Upon reaching a circle marked by a Memory Gardens sign, turn right into the circle and bear left at the first fork (near Foale mausoleum), continuing along the circle. Turn left at the Bethany Street sign, just beyond a

tall monument on the left whose base reads, 'Homberger'. Proceeding along Bethany Street, you will see a sign on the left reading, 'Grave of William Steinitz / First World Chess Champion'. It was placed there by Kurt Landsberger, grand-nephew of Steinitz, who wrote or edited two important books about the champion.

*Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that William Steinitz, so often the champion of what was then considered suspect and strange at the chessboard, should have a most unusual tombstone.*

Walking left at the sign across the lawn among the headstones, after approximately 200 feet you will see Steinitz's headstone. It is of an unusual, rectangular solid shape, and its square flat summit bears an engraved chessboard angled toward the approaching visitor. Engraved beneath the chessboard are the German words depicted in the photo, which translate to, 'Here rests in peace William Steinitz, Born 14 May 1837, Died 12 August 1900.' On the day we visited, the board held a small stone left by a well-wisher – an ancient Jewish mourning tradition with many possible interpretations.

The birth year displayed on the headstone is inaccurate: published sources agree that Steinitz was born in 1836. (At birth he bore the name 'Wolf', which he later changed to Wilhelm and eventually to the anglicised William.) His exact date of birth is also subject to some controversy since Steinitz himself once wrote that he was born on May 17. However, a birth registry on a Czech government website and Steinitz's U.S. passport application both give the date as May 14.

A series of grave numbers etched into curb stones along the left-hand side of Bethany Street provide another pointer of where to turn off the street to find Steinitz's grave. However, the sign directing visitors to the grave displays an incorrect number, 5893; the actual grave number is 5896.

The chessboard that crowns Steinitz's headstone displays chessmen etched on to four of its squares: a king on e4, queen on a8, rook on d5, and knight on a5, along with a plus (+) sign on e5. Although the pieces' colours are not evident and they do not comprise a legal chess position, the display might nevertheless signify that in death Steinitz finally got the opportunity to test his famous boast that even God could not defeat him.

## Lasker's Grave

A simpler, traditional headstone marks the grave of Emanuel Lasker. The multiple stones resting on its crest when we visited suggest that admirers from the chess world still come by to pay their respects to the man who held the chess crown for almost 27 years after dethroning Steinitz in their initial match in 1894.

Lasker is buried in Beth Olam Cemetery, one of a dozen or more memorial parks placed side by side in a three-mile stretch of northeastern Brooklyn and southwestern Queens. The three Manhattan synagogues that established Beth Olam in the 1850s continue to jointly manage it as well as host active congregations. A fraction of Evergreen's size, it occupies a little over 12 acres and holds almost 8,000 graves. Lasker lies in the section administered by Congregation Shearith Israel, in Row 24, Grave 81. Other eminent people buried in Beth Olam include Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo and Emma Lazarus, the author of the poem affixed to the base of the Statue of Liberty.

The following directions lead to Lasker's grave site from the 'lower' or south-eastern entrance, one of two entrance gates situated on different portions of Cypress Hills Street between the Jackie Robinson Parkway and Jamaica Avenue. That entrance is not marked with the Beth Olam name, but displays only a weathered, obsolete metal plaque on its right-hand stone pillar and the number '13' spray-painted in black on its left-hand pillar.

If driving, take the Cypress Hills Street exit (Exit 3) from the Jackie Robinson Parkway and go right, heading south-east along Cypress Hills Street. The entrance will be the second gate on your right. Note that the published address for Beth Olam Cemetery, 2 Cypress Hills Street, does not correspond with any existing building and might not work properly in a vehicle's GPS. Driving is not permitted within the cemetery, but visitors can park in the traffic circle near either entrance.

By public transport, Beth Olam can be reached via the B13 bus line along Cypress Hills Street (get off either at Cypress Avenue and walk south, or at Jamaica Avenue and walk north), or by taking the J train to Cypress Hills station. From the subway station, walk south-west on Jamaica Avenue to Cypress Hills Street, turn right, continue a few blocks and look for the unmarked cemetery entrance on your left.

Beth Olam is open from 9:30am to 4pm daily except for Saturdays and Jewish holidays. Requests for information before or during a visit can be directed to either Shearith Israel synagogue (212-873-0300) or B'nai Jeshurun synagogue (212-787-7600).

Upon entering the gate, mausoleums marked 'Aaron Buchsbaum' and 'Sylvester' will be visible to the left of the road, and one marked 'Leipzig' will be visible at right. At the end of the uphill road is a circle with two tall vertical monuments standing at its far end. Proceed beyond the far end of the circle and make a quick right on to the pathway just beyond the first mausoleum, marked 'Zion D. Bernstein'. Continue on that pathway, passing a row of hedges at right followed by a sturdy tree. Roughly 20 feet beyond the tree, turn left on to a narrow concrete walking path. Upon reaching the fourth row of parallel headstones to the right of the concrete path, turn right, leaving the concrete path.

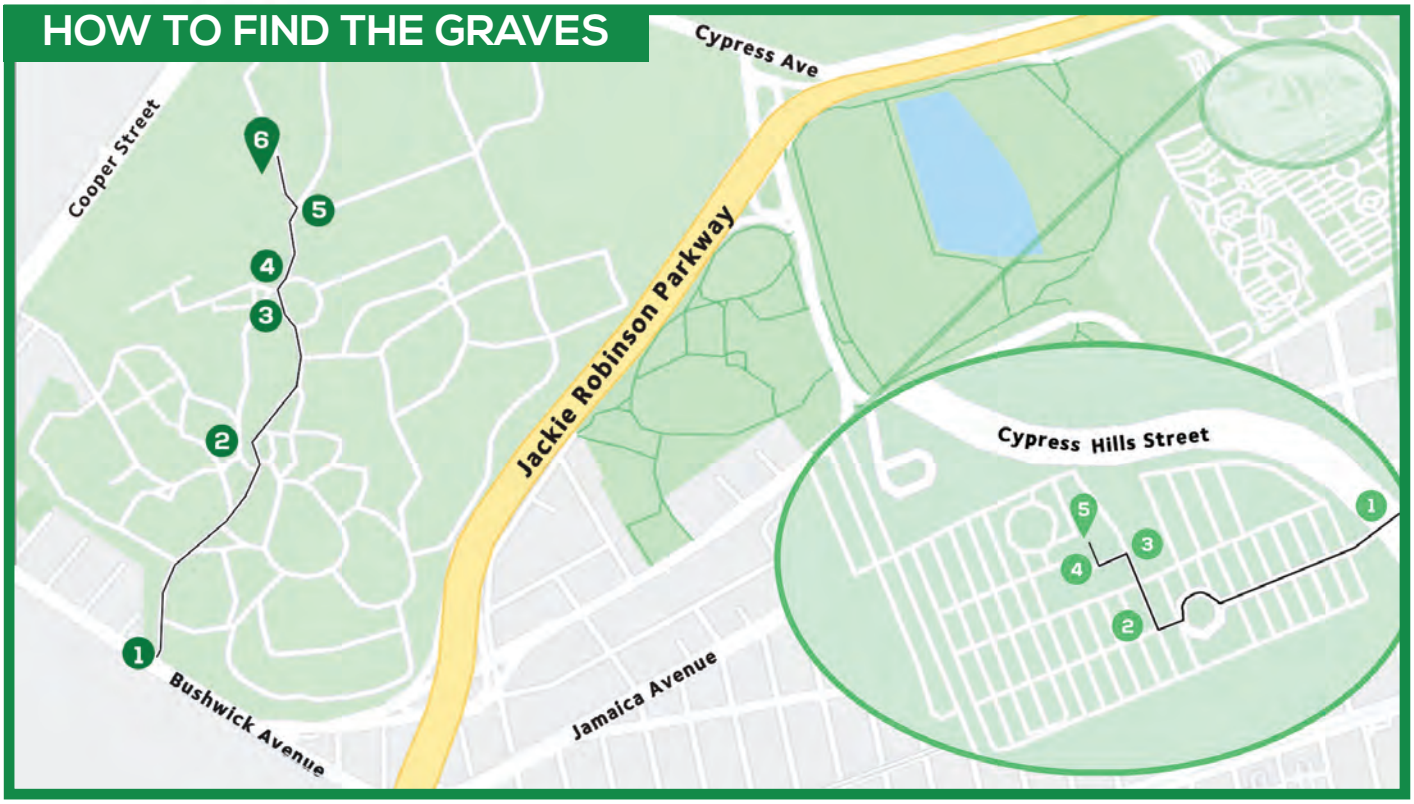
After walking approximately 60 feet along the grass between the third and fourth rows,

you will see Emanuel Lasker's headstone. It is dark and glossy, contrasting with the mostly light grey limestone headstones in its vicinity.

The relatively small grave marker displays no text but Lasker's name, beneath two Hebrew letter that signify 'Here lies'. A much larger one immediately behind it, marked 'Oppenheimer', may be useful as a landmark to find Lasker's headstone. (The individual beneath the large headstone, Heinz Ernst Oppenheimer, most likely bears no relation with Ludwig Leon Oppenheimer, Lasker's brother-in-law who was murdered by Nazis in Auschwitz in 1944. The surname match is coincidental.)

*Emanuel Lasker's headstone also stands out and remains well visited and in good condition.*

## HOW TO FIND THE GRAVES



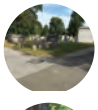

### THE ROUTE TO WILLIAM STEINITZ

**1. EVERGREEN CEMETERY GATE**
Bushwick Avenue and Conway Street, Brooklyn, New York

**2. CEMETERY OFFICE**
Bear left and continue past the office on your right and the Chinese headstones on your left

**3. "MEMORY GARDENS"**
Turn right at two-stage sign whose lower panel reads "Memory Gardens"

**4. FOALE MAUSOLEUM**
Bear left at the mausoleum marked "Foale"



**5. BETHANY STREET**
Go left at Bethany Street

**6. STEINITZ'S GRAVE**
Follow the sign on the left side of the road to arrive at Steinitz's grave

### THE ROUTE TO EMANUEL LASKER

**1. BETH OLAM CEMETERY**
Enter via south entrance on Cypress Hills Street, Brooklyn, New York

**2. BERNSTEIN MAUSOLEUM**
Upon leaving the circle, turn right on to the street just past the mausoleum marked "Zion D. Bernstein"

**3. HEDGES**
Turn left onto the narrow path a short distance beyond hedges and tree

**4. FOURTH ROW**
Turn right onto grass ahead of the fourth row of parallel headstones to the right of the concrete path

**5. LASKER'S HEADSTONE**
Lasker's headstone stands about 60 feet from the concrete path

## Steinitz's Life and Chess Career

Best known as chess's first official world champion, Wilhelm (William) Steinitz was far more than that. He can lay claim to be the founder of chess as we know it: a contest whose outcome in every case reflects actions taken by both sides, never by the winner alone. Steinitz taught that successful attacks grew out of advantages nurtured through positional play, looking beyond the older Romantic approach that had envisioned combinations as independent creations of a player's brilliant mind. He made the first systematic attempts to develop a theory of structural and dynamic factors and how they should dictate both sides' subsequent conduct of the game.

He was born in 1836 into a Jewish family in Prague, then part of the Austrian Empire. He learned to play chess at age 12, but his love and gift for it became manifest only in his twenties, after moving to Vienna in 1858. He moved to London soon after competing in the 1862 London International tournament and finishing just above the middle of a 14-man field that included many of the world's leading players.

Steinitz remained in England for the next 20 years, the most productive period of his chess career. During that time he was undefeated in a dozen formal matches, including three separate contests with Blackburne, one with Bird, and one with Zukertort some 14 years before their official world title match in 1886. The most consequential success of his early career came in 1866 when Steinitz narrowly overcame Adolf Anderssen in a 14-game match in London. Anderssen was then regarded as the world number one after Paul Morphy had withdrawn from competition. Although not labelled a world championship duel at the time, many chess authorities today view Steinitz's reign as having unofficially begun with that triumph.

While living in England Steinitz met his common-law first wife Caroline Golder (who died in 1892, age 47), fathered his first child Flora (who died in 1888, age 21), adjudicated all the unfinished games at the first of the annual Oxford-Cambridge Varsity chess matches, which continue to this day, and befriended and taught chess to prominent members of society including Lord Randolph Churchill and Richard Blackmore, the author of *Lorna Doone*. He reportedly dedicated to Blackmore his book of annotated games from his 1876 match with Blackburne.

In addition to his many English tournament and match victories while living there, two of Steinitz's most celebrated games took place during visits to England: brilliancies against Mongredien at London 1862 while he still lived in Vienna, and against Curt von Bardeleben at Hastings 1895, long after he had emigrated to America. (Also see Blackburne-Steinitz from London 1899, annotated at the end of this article.)

Steinitz supported himself by giving simultaneous exhibitions, teaching lessons to wealthy patrons, and writing about chess for various English magazines, alongside of earning less certain income from tournament and match winnings. But through a penchant for conducting wars of words against chess figures he felt had slighted him, over the years he alienated many individuals and institutions who had once been sources of much-needed income. Even before he first set foot in England, Steinitz's own Vienna club in 1862 had voted against designating him as its representative to the London International, for reasons never fully made public.

So, who can say what directly precipitated his highly consequential break-up with *The Field*, the gentlemen's sports magazine for whom Steinitz was the well-paid weekly chess correspondent from 1873 through to the latter part of 1882? Of the several English periodicals Steinitz wrote for during the 1870s and early 1880s, *The Field* was by far the most important to him and, arguably, to the country's chess community. Different authors offer varying and often conflicting theories about the dispute that led Steinitz to resign from the magazine soon after he returned from the 1882 Vienna International where he had finished in a first-place tie with Winawer.

"The events that led to Steinitz surrendering the editorship of the chess column in *The Field* are not simple to understand and there has never been a definitive explanation," Tim Harding, the pre-eminent English chess historian, wrote in his monumental 2020 book, *Steinitz in London*.

In late 1882 Steinitz made a prolonged visit to America, settling in New York the following year. There is wide agreement that the loss of a steady income from writing for *The Field* was a major impetus for his decision to leave England for good. Three years later, he became the first official world champion by defeating Johannes Zukertort in a 20-game match divided among New York, Saint Louis, and New Orleans. He became a naturalised U.S. citizen in 1888.

After successfully defending his title in two matches with Mikhail Chigorin and one with Isidor Gunsberg, Steinitz at age 58 was dethroned by Emanuel Lasker in an 1894 match. He then returned to the international tournament scene after a decade's absence, competing in major events in England, Russia, Germany, and Austria. At Hastings 1895, he managed a creditable fifth-place finish in what Kasparov called the most important tournament of the century, despite being the second oldest among 22 contestants.

Soon after losing a rematch against Lasker in Moscow in 1896-97, he reportedly suffered a mental breakdown and was involuntarily confined to a Moscow mental hospital for more than a month.

In his final tournament, London 1899, Steinitz finished near the bottom and won no prize for the first time in his career. Reports mention delusional statements and behaviour during his return voyage to New York that October and while at home early in the following year. Commitment to a series of mental hospitals followed beginning in February 1900. He died in the state mental hospital on Ward's Island on August 12, 1900, from "chronic endocardia (mitral stenosis)" and "acute melancholia" according to the death certificate. He was then nearly penniless; the German Press Club paid for his funeral and the German-inscribed headstone that marks his grave.

## Lasker's Life and Chess Career

Emanuel Lasker was born in 1868 to a Jewish family in what was then the Prussian province of Brandenburg, but is now part of Poland. His father worked as a carpenter, but also served as a synagogue cantor, and his grandfather had been a rabbi. A childhood gift for mathematics led his parents to send the 11-year-old boy to a top-quality high school some 140 miles away in Berlin, where his older brother Berthold was a medical student. Berthold Lasker, who went on to become a strong chess master himself, soon taught Emanuel how to play.

As the young Steinitz had done in Prague and Vienna, the teenage Emanuel Lasker frequented Berlin's many chess cafes along with his brother, who he joined in hustling chess games there. One report has Emanuel receiving knight odds at the Café Kaiserhof from his future world championship rival Siegbert Tarrasch, six years his senior. In 1889 Lasker won that club's championship tournament with a score of 20-0. A month later he earned the German master title by taking first at a tournament in Breslau.

After placing second behind Amos Burn in his first foreign event, Amsterdam 1889, the 21-year-old Lasker ventured to England early the following year to seek a match with a top British player. After initially failing to secure a match with leading lights such as Blackburne, Mason, Gunsberg, or Burn, he settled for playing Henry Bird in Liverpool, whom he roundly defeated.

Before leaving for America in late 1892 on an ultimately successful quest to wrest the title from Steinitz, Lasker went on to win matches against two lesser players, pummel Blackburne and dominate a second match with Bird. He also managed to win two separate strong tournaments in London in early 1892. Away from the board, he ran a chess pavilion at the German Exhibition in London in the summer of 1891 and launched his first chess magazine, *The London Chess Fortnightly*, which published 19 issues in 1892-93.

Fortified by tournament and match triumphs in England and the Continent, Lasker moved to New York in 1982 to mount a challenge to Steinitz. In an 1894 match divided among New York, Philadelphia, and Montreal, the 25-year-old challenger bested the 58-year-old incumbent by a decisive margin: 10 wins, 4 draws, and 5 losses.

The newly-crowned world champion returned to England for most of 1895, then for the super-strong London 1899 tournament, and then again from 1901-1902. London 1899 was one of several crowning achievements in Lasker's chess career: he took first place with just one loss and seven

draws in 26 games, leaving his closest rivals in the dust by four and a half points.

Lasker's varied chess activities in England in that period include the lecture series later published as *Common Sense in Chess*, a third-place finish at Hastings 1895 (while reportedly suffering after-effects of typhoid fever), and a brief informal match against Janowski in Manchester in 1901.

Lasker's mathematical career also advanced during his years in England. During 1895 he wrote two technical mathematical papers published in *Nature* magazine; the Proceedings of the London Mathematical Society published another paper of his the following year. A few years later while pursuing a doctorate in mathematics at Germany's Erlangen University, he obtained a temporary position as a mathematics lecturer at a predecessor of Manchester University. After failing to gain a permanent appointment there, he moved to New York in 1902 in hopes of steady university employment – which, however, likewise eluded him.

Between 1896 and 1910, Lasker successfully defended his title against Steinitz in an 1896-97 rematch and in later matches with Frank Marshall, Siegbert Tarrasch, Carl Schlechter and David Janowski, and negotiated match terms with at least three other challengers (Maroczy, Capablanca and Rubinstein) that didn't bear fruit. While still residing in America, Lasker married Martha Bamberger Cohn in Berlin in July 1911. The couple then moved back to Germany and purchased land outside Berlin.

Lasker retained the world championship title for almost 27 years, until a 1921 title match with Capablanca in Havana that he resigned due to ill health while trailing with 4 losses and 10 draws out of 14 games. In 1933 the Nazis seized Lasker's property in and around Berlin and he fled to England. His older sister Theophilia Hedwig Lasker later died in a gas chamber in the Sobibor Nazi death camp.

Lasker and his wife Martha relocated to Moscow in 1935 with support from Nikolai Krylenko, the Soviet Minister of Justice and a principal architect of Stalin's purges. This coincided with the aged ex-champion's participation in two top-level international tournaments in Moscow in 1935 and 1936. He was given a Moscow apartment, a university appointment in mathematics and honorary membership in the USSR Academy of Sciences, and a paid position training the national chess team.

His final significant chess competition took place in England: the great Nottingham 1936 tournament, where he represented the USSR. Finishing in the middle of that powerful 15-man field was nonetheless an impressive performance for a man aged 67. Of the six who led him in the final standings, four were current or past world champions and the other two later became prominent world title contenders.

In late 1937, the Laskers travelled to the U.S. to spend time with Martha's daughter from her first marriage and her grandchildren. According to a detailed account presented in Martha's unpublished memoirs, the visit became a permanent move after Martha, aged 70, fell ill and her doctors warned that she could not survive a return voyage to Europe. Emanuel himself fell sick in late 1940 and died on January 11, 1941, reportedly from a kidney infection while a charity patient in New York's Mount Sinai Hospital.

Lengthy intervals between some of Lasker's title matches have bred criticism that he dodged opponents by taking a hard line in match negotiations. But his insistence on high fees and other conditions helped pave the way for chess as a professional activity after many of his predecessors had died penniless. Moreover, Lasker was one of the first elite players to make conscious efforts to expand the audience for chess, by opening his lectures and exhibitions to the general public for a fee.

It was long said that Lasker did not found a well-defined, recognised 'school' of chess thought, as did Steinitz, Tarrasch, and Reti. Today, however, Lasker has come to be recognised as a forerunner of the 'universal' style: an approach that seamlessly blends strategy with tactics, and defence with counterattack. Lasker's focus on pragmatic considerations and active defence and his use of positional sacrifices also anticipated the Soviet school and held obvious appeal for players such as Korchnoi and Tal, both of whom named him as the greatest player ever.

Besides being a giant of chess history, Lasker also made notable contributions to mathematics. Late in life he competed in international bridge events and wrote books on bridge and other games – including inventing a checkers-like game he named 'Lasca'. He developed a friendship with Albert Einstein that survived Lasker's publicly disputing the validity of Einstein's theory of relativity.

## Illustrative Games

We conclude by showing a game played by Steinitz and one by Lasker during their years as former world champions. The games demonstrate what a powerful punch both men could still deliver at the board, even at an advanced age and within a year or two of the ends of their lives.

In this game, from Steinitz's final tournament, a mere 13 months before his death, he throws caution to the wind to annihilate Joseph Blackburne, a world-class master and perennial rival whom Steinitz had first locked horns with close to 40 years earlier.

### Notes by IM Yury Lapshun

**J.Blackburne-W.Steinitz**
London International 1899
*London System*

**1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3 ♘c6 5 c3**

No, this is not a Magnus Carlsen game from 2021. The London System, it seems, was as fashionable 120 years ago as it is today.

**5...♕b6 6 ♕c1**

Today it is widely understood that 6 ♕b3 is the best response, and that whichever side ends up initiating a queen trade will get the worse of the deal since the rook's activity on a half-open a-file will outweigh the disadvantage of doubled pawns Consequently, in the modern main line, the white queen retreats after provoking 6...c4: 7 ♕c2! ♗f5 8 ♕c1 e6 9 ♘bd2 is balanced.

**6...♗f5 7 dxc5**

Surrendering the centre works out badly for White.

**7...♕xc5 8 ♘bd2 ♖c8 9 ♘b3 ♕b6 10 ♘bd4 ♗e4**

An aggressive, computer-like reply.

**11 ♘xc6 bxc6 12 ♘d2?**

A needless retreat that further reduces White's central influence.

**12...♗f5 13 ♗e2 ♘d7**

The start of an ambitious plan to target White's bishop on f4 via pawn advances. 13...e6 was the most natural move.

**14 0–0 e5 15 ♗g3 h5!?**

The simple 15...♗e7 is a good move for humans and computers, but Steinitz is searching for a mating attack.

**16 h3 g5!? 17 e4**

17 c4 was the best way to challenge Steinitz's wild attack, but Blackburne found another good central thrust.

**17...♗e6 18 b4**

18 ♖e1 could support White's counterplay in the centre.

**18...g4 19 h4 ♗h6 20 a4?!**

Until this time-wasting idea, the chances still were closely balanced.

Preferable is either the solid 20 ♕c2 followed by ♖ad1, or the ambitious 20 ♖e1 dxe4 21 ♕c2 f5 22 ♘xe4!? fxe4 23 ♕xe4 ♔e7 (White is winning after 23...♔f7? 24 ♗c4) 24 ♗c4 ♗d5! (24...♗xc4?? 25 ♗xe5! wins for White) 25 ♗xd5 cxd5 26 ♕xd5, reaching a wild position with roughly equal chances according to *Stockfish*.

**20...dxe4 21 a5 ♕c7 22 ♕c2 f5**

Black has attained an advantage that is growing into a winning position.

**23 ♘c4 ♗d5 24 ♖fd1 f4**

Now White's dark-squared bishop is reduced to just a big pawn.

**25 ♗h2 ♘f6 26 g3 0-0**

The natural 26...f3 would finish entombing the bishop on h2, but the text is even stronger; it's the white king that Steinitz aims to entomb.

**27 gxf4 exf4 28 ♗f1 ♕g7 29 ♔h1 e3+**

29...g3 was another of many ways to win this completely winning position.

**30 ♖xd5 cxd5 31 ♘d6 ♘e4 32 ♘xe4 dxe4 33 fxe3 g3 34 ♗h3 ♖xc3 35 ♕a2+ ♔h8 36 ♖g1 ♕f6 37 ♖d1 gxh2 38 b5 ♖xe3 39 b6 axb6 40 a6 f3 41 a7 f2 42 ♖f1 ♖e1 43 ♕c4 e3 44 ♕e4**

Neither could 44 ♗g2 e2 stop three Black pawns on the second rank.

**44...e2 45 a8♕ ♖xf1+ 46 ♔xh2 ♕d6+ 0-1**

And 47 ♔g2 will be met with 47...♖g1#.

Emanuel Lasker demonstrates computer-like precision in the following game, played when he was 70(!) years old and had less than two years left to live. Although the setting was a simultaneous exhibition, Lasker's opponent, Max Demby, was not a typical clueless 'NN' victim. Some 20 years earlier Demby won a tournament in Panama, and close in time to this game he was one of four opponents to draw against George Koltanowski in a 10-board blindfold exhibition at the Manhattan Chess Club.

**E.Lasker-M.Demby**
New York (simul) 1939
*French Defence*

**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e5 ♘e7 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 0-0 7 ♗d3 c5 8 ♕h5 g6**

8...♘f5 seems safer after 9 ♘f3 (9 g4 ♕h4 forces a queen trade) 9...c4 10 ♗xf5 exf5. However, White has a much stronger option: 10 g4! g6 (or 10...cxd3 11 gxf5 exf5 12 ♖g1 g6 13 ♕h6 f6 14 ♖xg6+ hxg6 15 ♕xg6+ with a winning attack) 11 ♕h3 cxd3 12 gxf5 exf5 13 ♗g5, which leaves Black's kingside fatally weakened.

**9 ♕h6 f6 10 ♘f3**

10 h4 was another good move, but Lasker first safely develops his pieces.

**10...♘d7 11 h4**

**11...♖f7**

11...♘f5 12 ♗xf5 exf5 13 ♔f1 ♖e8 14 ♖h3 ♕e7 15 h5 wouldn't stop White's attack.

**12 exf6 ♘xf6 13 ♘e5 ♖g7 14 ♗g5 ♘f5**

14...♕f8 15 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 16 h5 ♘f5 17 ♗xf5 cxd4 18 cxd4 exf5 19 hxg6 is similar to the game.

**15 ♗xf5 exf5 16 h5 ♕e7**

16...♕f8 17 hxg6 is hopeless too for Black.

**17 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 18 hxg6 ♕e7 19 ♔d2**

19 ♔f1 wins too, but it's amazing to see how Lasker's moves throughout this game coincide with the computer's first choices.

**19...♗e6 20 ♖h5 ♖c8 21 gxh7+ 1-0**

On 21...♖xh7 22 ♖g5+ Black has no decent reply, while 21...♔h8 22 ♘g6+ secures an overwhelming advantage in material and position.

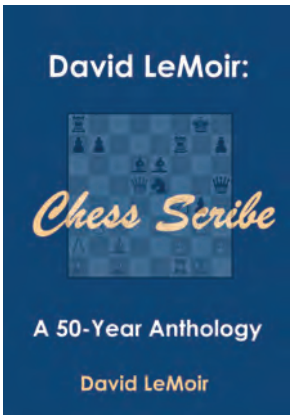
## About the Authors

**FM Jon Jacobs** contributed 12 *Chess Life* articles between 2005 and 2020, six of which won awards in the annual Chess Journalists of America contests. The current article and a predecessor that appeared in *Chess Life*, December 2020, are his first forays into writing about chess history and promoting chess tourism. Jon is also at work on a book and video series showcasing beautifully played upset games by club-level players, called *The Fish That Roared*, and runs a related Facebook group:

www.facebook.com/groups/942969445790845

**IM Yury Lapshun** has taught chess for more than 15 years, including coaching several national scholastic championship winners and World Youth Championship participants. He currently teaches for New York's Chess in the Schools. As a player, Yury is a three-time former Marshall Chess Club champion and participated in three U.S. Closed Championships. Yury is also the author of *Play 1 b4!* (Everyman, 2008) and *Seven Ways to Smash the Sicilian* (Everyman, 2009; both co-authored with Nick Conticello), and contributed a chapter to the Fifteenth Edition of *Modern Chess Openings*.

# The Passionate Chess Scribe




**Popular writer David LeMoir has produced an anthology of his favourite pieces**

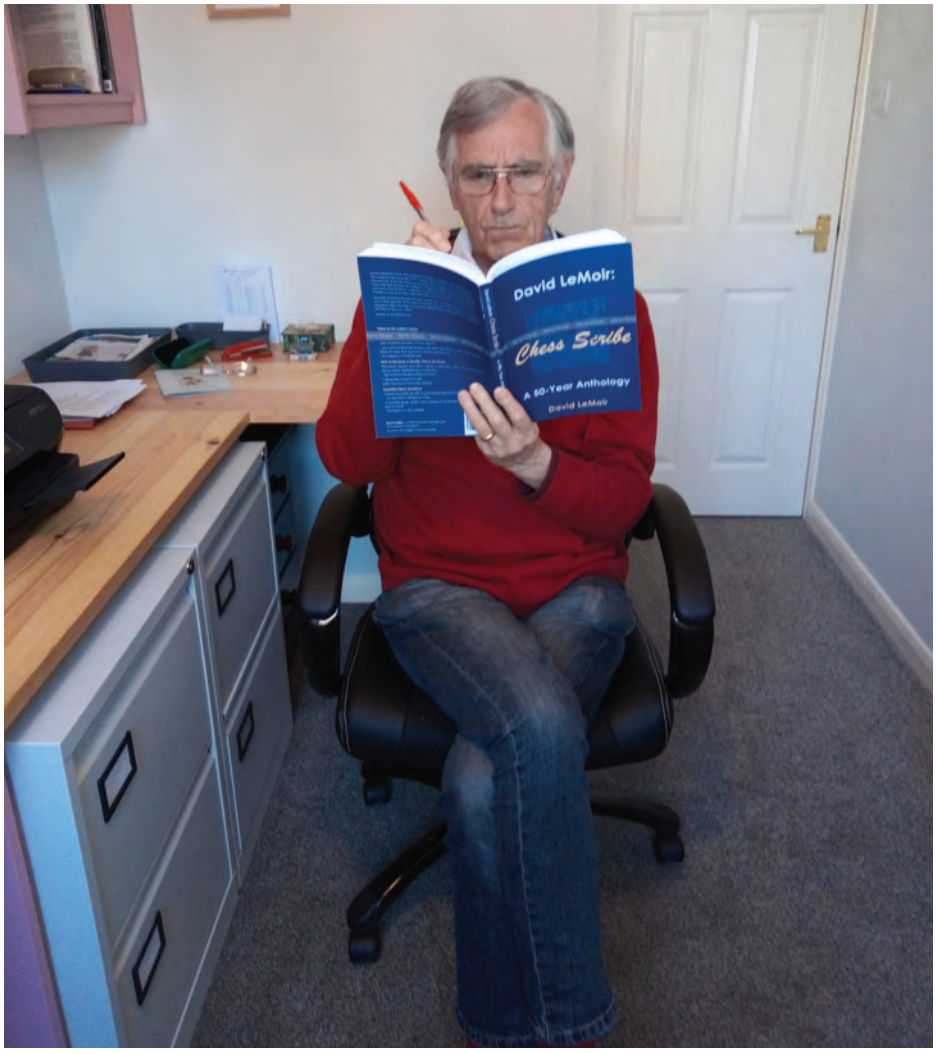
When I first wrote the article *You too can be a Chess Author!* (which appeared in the August 2020 issue of *CHESS*), little did I know that I would soon be following my own advice. I wrote it some months before lockdown, but when lockdown arrived I needed to decide what to do with my time, and it was an easy decision to fill it with preparing a new chess book. Having played a lot of online chess in the noughties, I didn't want to repeat the dose and, besides, over the years writing about chess had become my overriding passion. On the assumption that the Covid-19 crisis was not going to last long (an error that many of us made, I suspect), the obvious lockdown project was to create an anthology of my chess writings. There have been an awful lot of them.

It all started around the age of ten or eleven, when I first read Réti's classic *Modern Ideas In Chess*. Although I didn't fully understand everything it was telling me, it inspired in me not only the wish to read more about our wonderful game, but also the passion to write about it. Long before anyone told me that annotating my own games would be good for my chess, I did just that because I loved the process.

I sent some of my games into the local newspapers with brief annotations. In my mid-teens, with the help of my mother who typed my dictated words straight on to a duplicating stencil, I even occasionally produced a terrible chess magazine for my local chess club. If you want a good laugh, Google 'Roneo' and you will see how primitive and time-consuming document duplication was before the age of the photocopier and the computer.

It was not until I was at college, at the beginning of the 1970s, that I plucked up the courage to send a game annotation to *CHESS*, where dear old B. H. Wood published it. That started me off and, when pressures of work allowed, I turned myself into a chess feature writer – graduating from single game annotations to full multi-page features.

Many years later, my wife and I retired early from our work and moved to Norfolk, being able to support ourselves thanks to the simple policy of living frugally until our pensions became payable. That gave me the time to get heavily involved in chess authorship and I moved into writing chess books. In the early noughties, my three books – *How To Be Lucky In* Chess, *How To Become A Deadly Chess Tactician*, and *Essential Chess Sacrifices*, all published by Gambit – achieved heart-warming critical acclaim and sold well around the world. Everything looked rosy for a future in chess book authorship, but illness intervened and it became necessary to rein in my ambitions.




*Captured deep in thought, David LeMoir breaks his own rule and is seen frantically proofing his new book, which has been self-published via Amazon and is available from Chess & Bridge.*

I found that Norfolk had a fine monthly chess magazine entitled *En Passant* (not to be confused with a few other publications of the same name), which thrived on readers sending in articles – for which they received no payment – and soon I became not only a regular contributor, but virtually the in-house reporter. There were tournaments to report on and games to annotate, but also I was repeatedly inspired to launch into some new project.

Besides large numbers of one-off articles, I developed several series presenting new ways to look at sacrifices, combinations and traps. One series on sacrifices had provided much of the thinking behind *Deadly*. Others were eventually expanded and refined to

become major series in *CHESS*. *Keep Your Traps Shut* appeared in January, March, May and July 2010. *The Multiple Whammy* featured in November and December 2010, and January 2011.

Apart from the books, my work appeared more than thirty times in *CHESS* and *British Chess Magazine*, hundreds of times in *En Passant*, in databases of all games played in Norfolk Championships and Norfolk Open tournaments which I prepared every year from 2009 (and which appeared on the Norfolk Chess Association website), and also in a few other publications along the way.

All in all, I reckon that I have written at least a million words on chess, and an anthology was an obvious way to present the best of them to the chess-reading public. Various clever titles crossed my mind, including 'A Million Words On Chess', but in the end I plumped for *David LeMoir: Chess Scribe – A 50-Year Anthology* because that gives a clear idea of what the reader should expect.

To start with, everything was straightforward: re-typing those early articles which were only available in hard-copy form; electronically copying everything else into the master document; changing everything to a common format; and establishing a game file in ChessBase to create the diagrams. When I looked at the result, it looked like just about every other self-published book on Amazon's websites. Single column, notation with pieces represented by letters rather than figurines, and diagrams with letters around the outside – the normal output of a ChessBase file. A dead give-away.

This is where pride took over – to my cost. I decided that I wanted my book to look more professional, with a mixture of one and two columns, figurine notation and clear, 'proper' diagrams. Such diagrams are treated by desktop publishing (DTP) software as pictures standing independent of the text. In theory, the changes that I planned to make would already take a fair amount of time and effort, but, as I worked, I found that my software couldn't cope well with either of them. My usual DTP software couldn't display figurines. I only found that out after I had meticulously changed each move (thousands of them!) in the first half of the book.

So I changed to a different DTP program. That one coped with the figurines, but the diagrams would not stay where I wanted them in the text. A third program didn't deal too well with either the figurines or the diagrams, but, through painstaking checking and correcting, I was able to cope with that. The problem that all this caused was that it took my eye off the usual error-correction task.

In my article *You too can be a Chess Author!* I cautioned any budding author not to go it alone. Authors find it almost impossible to spot the errors in their own work, and checking chess text is notoriously difficult. Get someone else to do the checking, I said. For various reasons, mainly to do with covid, this wasn't possible for me. Coming up to publication date, I suddenly noticed a mass of text and format errors which had to be corrected in a great hurry.

Thankfully, I believe my efforts to create a professional look paid off in the end. I am particularly pleased with my attempt to design a simple, but smart and impactful cover.

I have only seen four personal anthologies of chess writings. Two are collections of writings of Cecil Purdy, the man who made it his business to teach Australians how to play chess, and did so very well. There is a large tome of Nimzowitsch's writings (*Aron Nimzowitsch 1928-1935 Annotated Games & Essays*). However, my favourite is *Tony Miles: 'It's Only Me'*, a collection of annotations – often laugh-out-loud funny – of his own games by England's first grandmaster.

All three subjects are no longer with us and I wondered whether anyone would be interested in a collection of writings by someone who is still living. I'm also not a titled player – my highest grade of 212 fleetingly squeezed me into the top 60 in BCF's grading list at the time. On the other hand, the success of my books and magazine articles, plus the positive response from several authorities to whom I put my idea, made me believe that the effort could be worthwhile.

Put simply, it seems that people like what I write. My intention is always to entertain as well as to instruct, and I cover a wide range of chess topics in a way that is often original without being idiosyncratic. My wife knows nothing about chess beyond what I have told her, but when she looked at the book's contents list she remarked that anyone would be fascinated to read features with such titles as 'What Did You Do With Your Whit Weekend?', 'Be very, very afraid!', 'Ben's Seasonal Norfolk Stuffing' and 'Lightning Strikes Three Times – Twice'.

*David LeMoir: Chess Scribe* contains all of my articles which have appeared in *CHESS* and *BCM.* They take up just over half of the book. Most of the remainder consists of a wide variety of articles from *En Passant*. I will leave you with one extract from *En Passant* – the shortest article in the book – which gives you some idea of the variety on offer.

## Are you as smart as a fourteen-year-old?

(*En Passant*, August 2008)

Can you find the combination played by Black in this position?

WARNING: Don't look at it for too long or you might still be at it next week.

This was a position that I presented to Norwich juniors at my recent coaching session on basic tactics. I separated off the four strongest present – William Boulton, Gordon Scott, Gabriel Barr and Ben Slater – and gave the problem to them while continuing with more basic stuff for the others. After about ten minutes, they returned and presented the full audience with the solution which was:

**1...♖xh2!! 2 ♖xh2 ♕xa3! 3 bxa3**

3 ♔b1 prevents the threatened 3...♕a1 mate, but Black plays 3...♘c3+! 4 bxc3 ♔a8! followed by a deadly check on the b-file. The team gave this idea, but didn't mention 3 c3. That is no problem because Black still has a strong attack after the natural 3...♕a1+ 4 ♔c2 ♕a4+ 5 ♔c1 (the king cannot hide on b1 because the d1 rook is *en prise*). In fact, now Black can play the decisive 5...♗c5 followed by ...♘f2, e.g. 6 ♕f3 g4 7 ♕e2 ♘f2 8 ♖d2 ♕xf4 (attacking the loose rook on h2) 9 ♖h7 ♗e3 and the white position collapses.

**3...♗xa3+ 4 ♔b1 ♘c3+ 5 ♔a1 ♗b2+! 6 ♔xb2 ♘xd1+ 7 ♔b3 ♘xe3**

And Black should win the endgame with best play.

Does that mean our juniors are world beaters? Not on its own. Let me explain.

First, this combination came in a section of the day devoted to knight forks. Second, and most important, I had just shown the group this position:

Here the solution is **1 ♗g7+! ♔xg7 2 ♘e8+**, winning the queen.

The problem in the starting position of the main combination is that the h1-rook protects the d1-rook, so the combination doesn't work at once.

This episode reinforces the need for us to learn certain basic combinational patterns. It may impress you that William, Gordon, Gabriel and Ben solved such an apparently complex problem. You may be interested to know that I gave it to them because, having been exposed to the pattern immediately beforehand, I fully expected them to succeed.

# Building a Study

**The technical aspect is no less important than spotting an idea, as Amatzia Avni explains**

A lot of players, amateurs and advanced alike, are puzzled by how a chess study (étude) is created; the path from a fraction of an idea to a complete work seems mysterious to them. In the past, I wrote about how a composer develops his ideas ('How Chess Ideas Evolve' in the April 2019 *CHESS*), but apart from one's main ideas, the technical phase – assembling everything together – is essential.

Frequently the creative process of building a study is chaotic and messy. But sometimes, as in the following case, one can clearly identify structured phases. The major part of this piece was written the day after the study was finished, when memories were still fresh.

## 1. Inspiration

I was aware of a 1986 study by Krikheli, which I presented in one of my books.

*White to play and win*

**1 ♖d3**
Threatening 2 ♖h3#, as well as the black queen.
**1...♕a7+ 2 ♗d4 ♕d7**
The only move.
**3 ♗g7+! ♕xg7 4 ♖h3#**

One day I saw a study combining mate and stalemate, using the mechanism below.

*White to play and draw*

**1 ♗g8+! ♔h8!**
It's stalemate after White's next move, but if 1...♔xg8? 2 ♖xc8+ or 1...♕xg8? 2 ♖h3#.
**2 ♖xc8**

## 2. An Idea

I wondered how this could be expressed in a way that delivering the check is performed by a white queen, instead of a bishop, thus enhancing the aesthetical effect.

## 3. The Basic Scheme

*White to play and win*

**1 ♕g8+!**
1 ♕xb8? or 1 ♖xb8? is stalemate.
**1...♕xg8**
Or 1...♔xg8 2 ♖xb8+.
**2 ♖h2#**

## 4. Implementation Problems

In addition to 1 ♕g8+, White may simply move his queen to protect his rook, winning on material. There are three such moves: 1 ♕d4, 1 ♕d2 and 1 ♕b6, ruining the scheme, as a study must have a unique solution.

I noticed that by placing White's king on d4, two of these problems are evaded.

Now only the possibility of 1 ♕b6 should be taken care of.

## 5. Old Problems Solved, But New Problems Arise

A common occurrence in chess, as in life, is that fixing one problem creates a new one. Adding a pair of pawns on the a-file solves the problem of the second solution 1 ♕b6, but now a new obstacle appears. White can also win by **1 ♕h8+!**, as after the liquidation which follows 1...♕xh8 2 ♖h2+ ♔g8 3 ♖xh8+ ♔xh8, White heads towards the black a-pawn with 4 ♔d5, and wins.

## 6. A Solution is Found, But Not a Satisfactory One

*White to play and win*

**1 d7 ♔h7! 2 d8♕**
Instead, 2 ♖xa7 ♕c6 3 d8♕ ♕c5+! is only a draw and 2 ♗c7 ♕c6 3 d8♕ ♕c3+ 4 ♔d5 ♕xa1 5 ♕e7 ♕d1+ 6 ♔c6 ♕xb3 7 ♗e5 ♕g8 8 ♔xb5 b3 sets up a fortress.
**2...axb6! 3 ♕g8+!!**

3 ♕xa8 is stalemate and 3 ♕h8+ leads to a drawn pawn ending: 3...♕xh8 4 ♖h1+ ♔g8 5 ♖xh8+ ♔xh8 6 ♔d5 ♔g8 7 ♔c6 ♔f7 8 ♔xb6 ♔e6 9 ♔xb5 ♔f5 10 ♔xb4 ♔xg5. However, paying a price of four pawns on the b-file is sub-optimal, to put it mildly.

**3...♕xg8 4 ♖h1#**

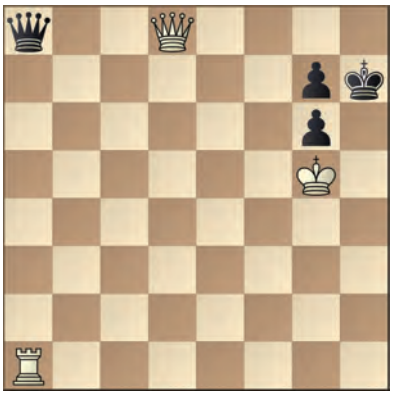
## 7. Getting Stuck

Before investing more effort, I asked my friend, the renowned composer Gady Costeff, to search for anticipation (previous works which express similar ideas) by CQL (a modern searching tool). He pointed out several studies, but they were just related, not identical.

Developing the scheme further didn't bring any relief. I regularly work with other composers, so I asked the strong Ukrainian composer, Vladislav Tarasiuk, to have a look at my scheme.

## 8. Breakthrough

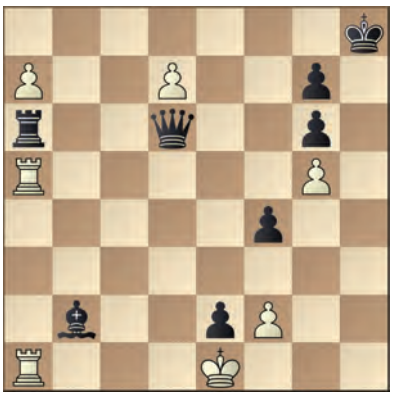
It is common in composers' practice, to go back and forth; if development is not reached, we examine again our basic assumptions and the starting scheme. Vladislav abandoned my draft and found an improved, economical matrix, which avoids the ugly b-pawns.



1 ♕g8+! is the only winning move here, as the alternatives 1 ♕d4? ♕d8+!! and 1 ♕d1? ♕g2+ only draw, while 1 ♕a5? will be countered by either of these defences.

## 9. A Fresh Attempt

Tarasiuk went on to suggest a good draft, with clever sacrificial counterplay by Black.



*White to play and win*

**1 a8♕+ ♖xa8 2 ♖xa8+ ♔h7 3 d8♕ ♕b4+**
3...♕xd8 4 ♖xd8 ♗xa1 5 ♔xe2 wins.
**4 ♔xe2 f3+!**
If 4...♕c4+ 5 ♔d1! ♕b3+ 6 ♔e1! ♕b4+ 7 ♔f1! ♕c4+ 8 ♔g1! and wins.
**5 ♔xf3 ♕b7+ 6 ♔g3!**
And not 6 ♔e2? ♕e4+.
**6...♗e5+ 7 f4 ♗xf4+!**

**8 ♔h4!**
8 ♔xf4? ♕e4+ 9 ♔xe4 is stalemate.
**8...♗xg5+!**
Angling for 9 ♕xg5? ♕h1+! 10 ♖xh1 – stalemate. Instead, 8...♗g3+ 9 ♔h3! wins.
**9 ♔xg5 ♕xa8! 10 ♕g8+!!**
This foils Black's stalemate plans, thereby side-stepping 10 ♕xa8?, 10 ♕d4? ♕d8+! 11 ♕xd8 and 10 ♕d1? ♕g2+! (not 10...♕d8+? 11 ♔g4!).
**10...♕xg8 11 ♖h1#**

## 10. The Final Touch

Naturally, the first two moves add nothing. Hence, the study will start with 1 d8♕. I wondered if it was possible to introduce play before this obvious key. Eventually I reached the following, which became the final product.

**Amatzia Avni & Vladislav Tarasiuk**
*EG* 2021

*White to play and win*

**1 d6**
1 ♖e6? ♗xa1 2 d6 ♗c3 3 d7 ♗a5 is only a draw.
**1...e1♕**
1...♗xa1 2 d7 e1♕ 3 d8♕+ ♔h7 4 ♕d3! wins.
**2 d7 ♕e7**
Or 2...♗a5 3 ♖6xa5! (and not 3 ♖1xa5? ♗xf3+ 4 ♔xf3 ♕d1+ 5 ♔g3 ♕xd7 with a draw) 3...♗xf3+ (if 3...♔h7 4 d8♕ ♗xf3+ 5 ♔g3!) 4 ♔xf3 ♕c3+ 5 ♔g2 ♕c6+ 6 f3 ♕xd7 7 ♖a8+ ♔f7 (7...♔h7 8 ♖h1+) 8 ♖1a7 and wins.
**3 ♖a8+**
Side-stepping 3 ♖xd1? ♕xg5+.
**3...♔h7**
If 3...♔f7 4 d8♕ or even 4 d8♘+ and wins.
**4 d8♕**

**4...♗xf3+**
Playing for stalemate.
**5 ♔xf3**
And not 5 ♔g1 ♕xd8 6 ♖xd8 ♗xa1.
**5...♕b7+ 6 ♔g3**
6 ♔f4 ♗e5+! 7 ♔e3 ♗d4+ 8 ♕xd4 ♕e4+ saves the day.
**6...♗e5+ 7 f4 ♗xf4+ 8 ♔h4!**
And again not 8 ♔xf4 ♕e4+!.
**8...♗xg5+**
8...♗g3+? 9 ♔h3! wins.
**9 ♔xg5**
Avoiding 9 ♕xg5 ♕h1+!.
**9...♕xa8!**

The critical position.
**10 ♕g8+!! ♕xg8**
Or 10...♔xg8 11 ♖xa8+.
**11 ♖h1#**

We have witnessed a demonstration that good ideas alone are insufficient to make a strong study. In what is called 'the art of creation', a lot of work is required, with false trials leading eventually to happy discoveries...

♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔

## Keeping Up With...

# Keymer

**Like Praggnanandhaa, Vincent Keymer is very much a rising force**

He may lack the rare talent of Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa, but the only player to defeat the 15-year-old Indian star at the recent Polgar Challenge has also been calmly continuing to make a name for himself of late. 16-year-old Vincent Keymer is coached by Peter Leko and, like his mentor, capable of displaying some most impressive positional understanding.

**V.Keymer-R.Praggnanandhaa**
Polgar Challenge 2021
*King's Indian Defence*

**1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 g3 0-0 5 ♗g2 d6 6 d4 ♘c6 7 0-0 e5 8 dxe5**

The modern choice, Black having scored quite well with 8 d5 ♘b8! 9 e4 a5.

**8...dxe5 9 ♗g5 h6!?**

A forcing option. The alternative is 9...♗e6 when after 10 ♕a4 Black has tried various squares for the queen, of which c8 may be best.

**10 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♘d5 ♔g7 13 ♘xc7 ♖b8 14 ♘d5**

14 e4 would leave a hole on e4, but may also be more critical.

**14...e4!**

Opening lines and continuing to force the pace. Black seems to have enough for his pawn.

**15 ♘d2 e3 16 ♘xf6 exd2 17 ♘d5 ♗g4 18 f3 ♗e6 19 e4**

Cementing the knight in place ahead of preparing to round up the straggler on d2, but now Black is able to play around the edges.

**19...♘a5 20 ♖fd1!**

Preparing to remove the d-pawn so was a better try than 20 b3 b5 when everything might have fizzled out.

**20...♘xc4 21 b3 ♗xd5 22 exd5 ♘e3 23 ♖xd2 ♖xd5 24 ♖xd5 ♘xd5 25 ♖c1**

Of course, this too should be a draw, but with the superior pieces, White can most certainly press a little.

**25...♘f6**

Preparing to challenge the rook with 26 ♖c7 ♘e8, but 25...♘b4!? 26 a3 ♘c6 might have been a better defence. White can switch to the d-file, but 27 ♖d1 ♖c8 28 ♖d7 ♘e5! supplies enough counterplay, and if 29 ♖xb7 ♖c1+ 30 ♔f2 ♖c2+ 31 ♔f1 ♖c1+, etc.

**26 f4 ♘e8 27 ♔f2 b6 28 ♗f3 ♖d8 29 ♔e3**

White continues to enjoy the somewhat more active pieces, although clearly cracking Black's solid set-up won't be at all easy.

**29...♔f8 30 ♖c4 ♘d6!**

Timely activation.

**31 ♖c7 ♘f5+ 32 ♔e4 a5**

This wasn't strictly necessary as after 32...♘d6+ 33 ♔e5 there's 33...♘b5! and 32...♖e8+! 33 ♔d5 ♖d8+ should also be enough to hold, and if 34 ♔c4 ♘d6+ 35 ♔b4 a5+ 36 ♔a4 ♘f5! followed by bringing a piece to d4.

**33 ♗g4 ♖e8+?!**

This time the white king can safely amble over to the queenside. As such, Black should have sacrificed a pawn: 33...♖d2! 34 ♗xf5 gxf5+ 35 ♔xf5 ♔g7! when the rook endgame is looking rather drawish.

**34 ♔d3 ♖d8+ 35 ♔c3! ♘e3 36 ♗f3 ♖d6 37 a4!**

Fixing a weakness and the prelude to the upcoming breakthrough.

**37...h5 38 b4 axb4+ 39 ♔xb4 ♖d2?!**

The obvious move, but with 39...h4 40 ♔b5 ♘f5! Black would have obtained enough counterplay, and if 41 ♗c6 h3 42 ♔xb6 ♖d2 43 a5 ♖b2+ 44 ♔c5 ♖c2+ 45 ♔b6 ♖b2+ 46 ♔a7 ♖xh2 when the h-pawn should be roughly the equal of the a-pawn.

**40 ♔b5! ♖b2+ 41 ♔a6 ♖xh2 42 ♔xb6 ♖h3?**

An unfortunate choice of square. Black needed to try 42...h4! when he might still have drawn.

**43 ♖c3!**

43 ♖c8+ ♔g7 44 ♖c3! also works, and even 43 a5 ♖xg3 44 ♗e4 ♘f5 45 ♗d5 is probably winning too.

**43...♘f5 44 a5**

There's just no halting the passed pawn.

**44...♖xg3 45 a6 ♘e7 46 a7 ♖xf3 47 a8♕+ 1-0**

In the opening event of the Julius Baer Challengers Chess Tour, the German wunderkind demonstrated that he can very much attack too.

**G.Mammadzada-V.Keymer**
Polgar Challenge 2021

**25...a3!**

A notable and instructive choice, although 25...b3 26 a3 ♖a5 would also have been strong.

**26 b3 ♗e2!**

Olé! Clearly White can't allow 27 ♕xe2? ♕c3 or 27 ♘xe2? ♕xc2+.

**27 c4 ♗h5 28 ♕d2 ♕a7! 29 g4 ♗g6+ 30 ♔a1 ♖e8 31 ♖h1 ♖e5 32 ♖d1 ♖ae8 33 ♕xb4**

The light-squared bishop fittingly has the last laugh after this, but 33 h4 would have allowed 33...♖e1! 34 ♖xe1 (or 34 h5 ♖xd1 35 ♕xd1 ♖e1!) 34...♖xe1 when the rook is clearly untouchable, 35...♖xc1+ threatened and 35 c5? cleaned up by 35...♕e7! 36 cxd6 ♕e5 37 d7 ♕xd4+ 38 ♕xd4 ♖xc1#.

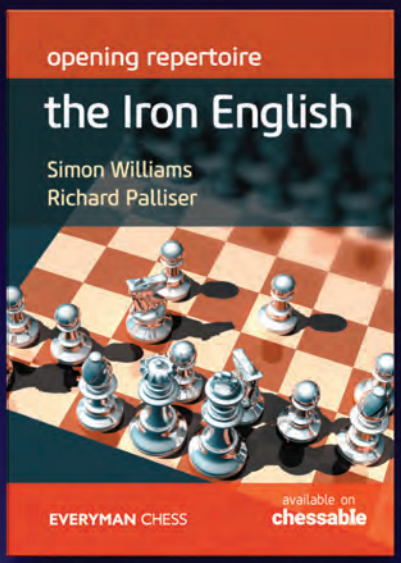
**33...♗c2 34 ♕xd6**

Once again, 34 ♖1d2 ♖e1 would be a decisive invasion.

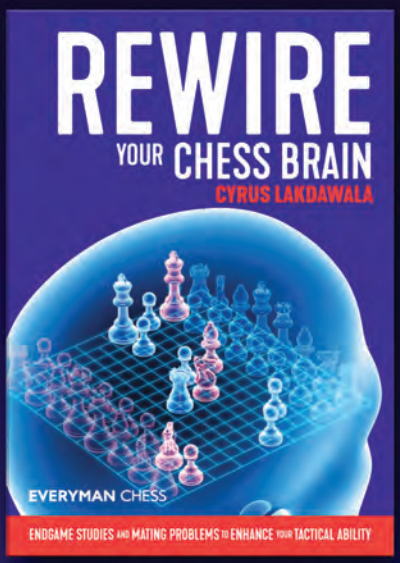
**34...♗xd1 35 ♖xd1 ♖e1 36 ♖xe1 ♕d4+ 0-1**

# High Praise Indeed!

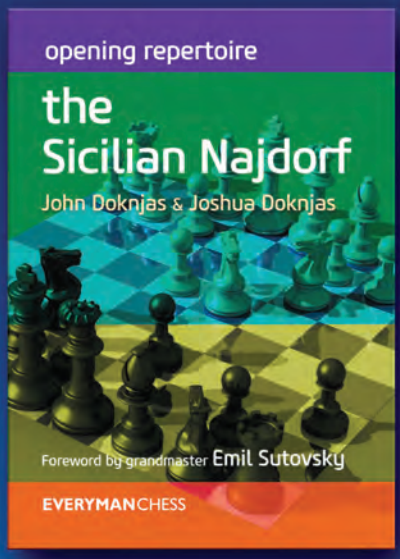
*"Overall this is one fantastic book on the French, written with purpose, perspicuity and, yes, panache."*
Paul Kane, TheCaissaKid.wordpress.com



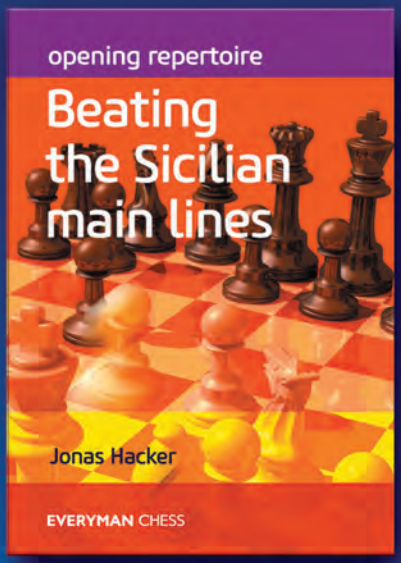

*"Highly recommended not only as an opening text but one from which a great deal may be learned about Chess in general"*
IM Mike Donnelly



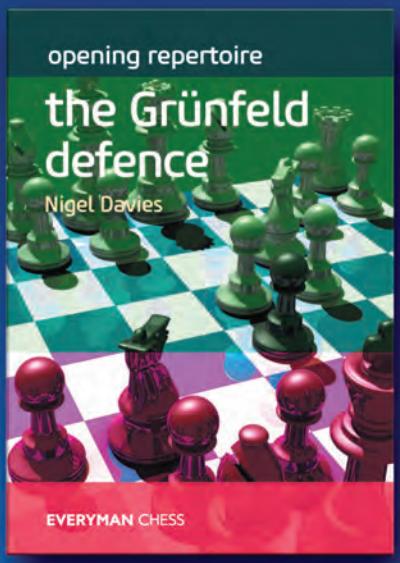

*"Lakdwala is an excellent host to keep you motivated as the difficulty of the problems increases graudually throughout the book, with some touches of humour and an engaging chatty manner.*
*A thoroughly enjoyable book! Recommended!"*
Matthew Sadler, New in Chess




*"The author is a young Canadian FM and unknown to me before I read this book. I tend to be suspicious when players of this strength write large opening books, but, keeping an open mind this time, I think he's done an excellent job!"*
Matthew Sadler, New in Chess




*"I've tried many different Anti-Sicilian lines over the years, but now I'm ready to add mostly the main lines to my repertoire. This book is one I definitely can use."*
Len Molden




*"Newcomers to the Grunfeld will find this an excellent introduction."*
IM John Donaldson

**EVERYMAN CHESS**
www.everymanchess.com
available through the London Chess Centre: www.chess.co.uk

# Birth of a Union

## Bob Jones on the late birth of the WECU and the mystery of Harry Trevenen

During the Inter-War years, for the purposes of facilitating inter-county competitions, the British Chess Federation divided the country into three areas or Unions: the Southern, Midland and Northern Unions, while the London League comprised a fourth unit. The BCF Yearbooks of the period show that the Northern Union consisted of seven affiliated counties, while the Midlands had eight. The Southern Union, on the other hand, consisted of a massive 21 counties, stretching from Cornwall to Norfolk, taking in Monmouthshire on the way.

In the 1935-6 Yearbook, for example, details of the SCCU's activities, officials, match results, trophies, accounts, tournament rules, etc, ran to 293 pages, leaving just 72 pages for the rest of the country. There were plenty of prizes to play for in the Southern Union, including the Championship competition and the Montague-Jones Cup, open to all affiliated counties except those in Group A (i.e. Essex, Sussex, Surrey, Kent and Middlesex).

For the purposes of the Montague-Jones competition, the Union was subdivided into the Western half (Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Monmouth, Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire) and the Eastern half (Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Northamptonshire, Cambridge and Norfolk). The Amboyna Shield, for teams of 50, was open only to teams in Group A, the Ebony Shield for county teams of 100, and the Stevenson Trophy, open only to first round losers in the Montague-Jones Cup.

The main area of interest for the average county player was the Montague-Jones tourney and how teams that won in the first round should subsequently be paired. The logistical nightmare scenario happened to Devon in 1935 when they had a bye in round one and were then paired against Norfolk. An ambitious captain like Devon's Ron Bruce would not be fazed by the challenge of getting his best team to the venue of the Final at the St. Bride Institute off London's Fleet Street. On the other hand, many Cornish players would blanch at the prospect; even a trip to Exeter would entail a 200 mile round trip.

All this complexity fed into a series of mumblings of discontent, mostly emanating from officials and players in the Bristol League, to the effect that, like the U.S. 19th century southern states, the Western counties should secede from the Federation, and create a new West of England Chess Union.

If the BCF thought that the end of the war would bring a return to things as they were before, they were mistaken as the West pressed their case, and in 1947 *BCM* announced: "The West of England Association has been formed for the double purpose of carrying out the West of England Championship and subsidiary tournaments, and of discovering and encouraging promising chess talent, particularly young players of both sexes [...] The Association is in no way opposed to existing organisations". However, it was to be another decade before the new 'Association' was upgraded to a fully fledged 'Union' at a grand inauguration ceremony at the Lord Raglan Hotel in London. More on this later.

Back in 1946, so keen had the Men of the West been that they had already held an almost secretive West of England Individual Championship, with just four invitees, comprising the well-known threesome of Capt. P. D. Bolland (Somerset), Ron Bruce (Devon) and Chris Sullivan (Gloucestershire), plus the relatively unknown 'wild card' Harry Trevenen (Cornwall). His invitation had been based on the fact that to everyone's surprise, and without any previous form, he had recently won, at the age of just 23, the championship of the very strong Bristol & Clifton Club. Was that, perhaps, just a one-off fluke? However, the clues were there for anyone to read.

Trevenen was, indeed, a man of mystery. Almost nothing was known about him, then or since, beyond his birth and death dates. He was born in May 1921, the son of Joseph, a stonemason and Honor (née White) living at 17, Holly Terrace, Heamoor, near Penzance. He was christened Henry Vickers White Trevenen. About his wider family, schooling, educational qualifications, job, how and where he learned to play, how he came to be living in Bristol during the War, etc, very little is known.

Trevenen had been playing in Division 1 of B. H. Wood's Postal Chess League. As Wood himself was involved in war work, his magazine, *Chess*, was much reduced in size, due to constraints on time and resources. What there was consisted mostly of a Games Section run by the world's greatest female player, Vera Menchik. In the June 1944 issue she awarded Trevenen a prize for "the best win with Black pieces", annotating it in some depth. Before most others she recognised the quality of his play, but it was almost the last thing she did as, days later, along with her mother and sister, she was killed when their home suffered a direct hit by a V2 missile.

**L.Ellison-H.Trevenen**
correspondence 1943/44
*English Opening*

**1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘f6 3 e4 ♗b4 4 d3 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 d6 6 ♗e2 0-0 7 0-0 ♗xc3 8 bxc3 ♘e8 9 ♘e1**

If 9 d4 ♕e7 "with chances for both sides", according to Menchik.

**9...f5 10 f3**

"A weak move", with Menchik preferring to open lines with 10 exf5 ♗xf5 11 ♗f3.

**10...♕e7 11 g3 g5 12 ♕d2**

The central counter to the flank attack, i.e. 12 d4!? was critical, as pointed out in *CHESS*.

**12...f4 13 g4?**

This passes without comment by Menchik, but may have been the critical mistake. White's kingside is now vulnerable and his set-up a passive, prospectless one.

**13...♘f6 14 ♗d1 ♗e6 15 ♖b1 b6 16 ♗a3 ♔g7 17 ♗b3 ♘a5 18 ♗a4 c5 19 ♕g2 ♖h8 20 ♗d1 h5**

Now after 21 h3 hxg4 22 hxg4 ♖h4

23 ♖f2 ♖ah8 24 ♔f1 ♖h1+ 25 ♔e2 ♔g8 (Menchik) Black dominates the board and will triple on the h-file, and here *Fritz* points out that Black may do even better to open lines with the neat 25...b5!.

**21 gxh5 ♖xh5 22 ♖f2 ♖g8 23 ♕h1 ♔h8 24 ♔f1 ♕h7 25 ♗c1 ♕h6 26 ♖bb2 ♖h4 27 ♔g1 ♘h5!**

Preventing the king returning to f1.

**28 ♖fc2 g4 29 fxg4 ♗xg4 30 ♗xg4 ♖gxg4+ 31 ♖g2 ♘g3 32 ♖xg3 ♖xg3+ 33 ♖g2 ♕h5! 34 ♖xg3 fxg3 35 ♕f3 gxh2+ 36 ♔h1 ♕xf3+ 37 ♘xf3 ♖h3 38 ♘xh2 ♖xd3 39 ♗g5 ♘xc4 40 ♔g2 ♘d2 0-1**

As it turned out, Trevenen won this inaugural, test-bed West of England Championship convincingly, in something of a sensation at the time. He just seemed to turn up, relatively unknown and became the first West of England Champion, just like that. Nor was it a fluke, as in 1948 he came second a half point behind A. R. B. Thomas, who took 97 moves to beat Trevenen who would otherwise have retained the title. He won it back in 1949, a full point clear of Thomas and Bruce, and for a third time in 1950, one and a half points ahead of the 160-man field, dropping only half a point out of seven.

After this third title Trevenen went straight on to Southsea to take part in the 2nd SCCU Congress. The sensation of that event was the emergence of 16-year-old Jonathan Penrose coming equal third behind Bisguier and Tartakower, but not very far behind in this field of 42 was Trevenen, tying for seventh just a half point behind Bogoljubow, and a point behind Penrose, Golombek and Lothar Schmid.

Back to 1947, the founding year of the West Of England Chess Association, the counties that affiliated were Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Dorset. The new Committee formulated the rules and pattern of activity. Inter-County matches were to be arranged between county captains, according to a timetable set by the Committee. There would be an annual congress open to all and held over the Easter weekend at a seaside venue, moving around the different counties. This would enable whole families to participate in a weekend away, and hotel accommodation would be plentiful. Over the years Newquay, Weston-Super-Mare, Torquay, and Weymouth became regular and popular venues. The individual winner of the congress would become the West of England Champion and would hold the new cup for 12 months.

Here is a list of the early champions:

| Year | First Place | County & Venue |
|---|---|---|
| 1946 | H. V Trevenen | Cornwall/Bristol |
| 1947 | A.R.B. Thomas | Devon/Bristol |
| 1948 | A.R.B. Thomas & P. D. Bolland | Somerset/Bristol |
| 1949 | H. V. Trevenen | Cornwall/Plymouth |
| 1950 | H. V. Trevenen | Cornwall/Weymouth |
| 1951 | R. Bruce & F. Kitto | Devon/Newquay |
| 1952 | A.R.B. Thomas | Devon/Weston-S-M |
| 1953 | A.R.B. Thomas & P. Copping | Devon & Wilts/Paignton |
| 1954 | Thomas & Dr. Aitken | Devon & Glos/Newquay |
| 1955 | F. E. A. Kitto | Devon/Weymouth |
| 1956 | P. F. Copping | Wiltshire/Bath |
| 1957 | J. Ansell | Glos/Bournemouth |
| 1958 | R. A. Slade | Devon/Newquay |
| 1959 | Dr. J. M. Aitken | Glos/Paignton |
| 1960 | A. R. B. Thomas | Devon/Bristol |

*Rowena Bruce faces H. G. Wright of Richmond at the second Southsea Congress at Easter 1950. In the background is Harry Trevenen on his way to a win against Alfred Eva and a fine final score.*

Although in 1947 the Bristolians had announced themselves as a new 'Association' – a fait accompli – they did, in fact, wish to become a fully-fledged Union, but there was opposition on both sides of the fence, the BCF and the West country. It may have been, for instance, that Ron Bruce harboured a secret wish to become President of the SCCU at some point.

It took 10 years of negotiation before the way ahead was finally cleared of all obstacles, and on Saturday July 6th 1957 the AGM of the SCCU was held in London, on one of the sunniest and warmest days of the year. It was attended by delegates and officials of all the Unions, and their wives, and was preceded by an inaugural dinner to celebrate the creation of the West of England Chess Union. *BCM* was wholehearted in its reporting of the occasion.

*"After the toast to 'The Queen', the President of the Norfolk Chess Association proposed the health of the 'The West of England Chess Union' and this was responded to in very appreciative terms by Mr. A. Wilson Osborne, WECU's first President. Lastly, the Chairman of the meeting proposed the toast of 'The Inauguration' and declared WECU in being, and as a mark of the blessing of the SCCU he formally handed over to its President a proportion of the SCCU funds, to see the new Union on its way to a healthy start with the hope of many years of prosperous chess activity ahead. So concluded this historic chess occasion, one which live for a long time in the memory of those who were privileged to be present."*

The new Union may have spent a decade in utero, but the birth itself was joyful.

But what happened to the pioneering West of England Champion, Henry Vickers Trevenen? A great future beckoned for the Cornishman, based on his results, but this early run of success was not to last. His appearances at events tailed off and his form fell away.

Privately Trevenen was struggling with mental illness and was eventually committed to the Cornwall Mental Asylum in Bodmin, the old St. Lawrence's Hospital, where he spent the rest of his life.

The exact nature of his illness is not clear, but when the West country problemist, David Howard, was travelling in that area in the 1970s, he decided to try and track Trevenen down. He found the hospital and asked at reception whether he might be allowed to visit him. A nurse went off to his room to ask Trevenen whether he felt like taking a visitor, which he did, and the nurse escorted David to the room, warning him that it could only be for one hour maximum.

Some years later, David told me that Trevenen had seemed relaxed and perfectly lucid as they chatted about the old days, and thanked him for visiting. On the way out, the nurse, a little curious, asked David what they'd talked about during that hour and he told her. As their footsteps echoed down the empty corridors she said "Ah, of course. He knows everything about chess does our Harry."

Trevenen remained in Bodmin until the Autumn of 1982 when he developed intestinal problems and was transferred to Treliske Hospital, Truro, for exploratory tests. Within a few days he had contracted pneumonia and died there on 10th October, aged 61. Cornwall may have lost a chess legend, but by then it was clear that a replacement had arrived on the scene – Michael Adams.

# Never Mind the Grandmasters...

## Here come the amateurs - by Carl Portman (carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk)

Objectivity is just a word. There are several definitions for it, depending upon what source you interrogate. Here is one: "*In philosophy, objectivity is the concept of truth independent from individual subjectivity. A proposition is considered to have objective truth when its truth conditions are met without bias caused by a sentient subject. Scientific objectivity refers to the ability to judge without partiality or external influence.*"

Well, OK, that's a bit long-winded. In essence it means the truth is out there so you can either deny it or face it and just be honest. In chess terms I have had to try to apply this to coaching an intermediate student of late. The subject of which chess openings to learn has arisen, as it always does, and this is an area where coaches can easily be subjective, rather than objective. That is to say they will teach the openings that they play, based on their own bias or feelings and experiences. The opening might not objectively be 'best' of course, but I have no problem as long as this is declared to the student from the off.

Most books recommend 1 e4 as the first move, and there is good reason for that, but thankfully my student has an inquisitive nature and specifically asked me for something beginning with 1 d4 that is a solid, easy opening to learn.

Here I was able to oblige and recommend an opening that I like, and have played many times. I refer to the Colle System. The student does not have to remember complex lines and they can easily obtain a position that extends an arm into the middlegame. They can develop a feel for the more closed positions and the subtle art of manoeuvring with this opening. Also move order is often not so critical and it is not too difficult to understand the strategy behind the opening. I do believe that it is a good all-rounder and the Colle has served me and others very well.

I wanted to analyse one of my own games with my student, as opposed to one selected from the database. It has more of a personal feel if I use my own, regardless of the quality of the game which these days can always be put into an engine for analysis of 'the truth' afterwards.

I interrogated my own database and pulled up a game from 2006. It was a county match between Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. For those that believe county matches are unnecessary or dead in the water, think on. They still hold value for many chess players despite the creeping rise of online chess, so let's not rid ourselves of them just yet. I still enjoy finding county games in my database.

I played for Oxfordshire and my opponent was a young man who had apparently been top board for Bucks the previous season. He said his grade was ECF 174 (in old money), and mine was 156. I see that Koichi Nicholas has had spells of inactivity, but is listed at 2094 on the FIDE website, so I am content that I did play a pretty decent opponent.

I thought I would share this game with readers. I have featured a couple of games that I lost in recent times, so I need to demonstrate that I have actually won a game of chess before. I can think of two points that the beginner/intermediate player might take from the game. The issue about keeping the king in the centre, without castling is one and the other is the over-estimation of your position. You cannot just throw bits at the opposition in the hope that it will be enough to win. Intuition and creativity are absolutely key in chess, but then so is concrete analysis.

Knowing what to apply and when is the very essence of the game, and an art form. I speak as if I am good at applying these points myself. Oh, dear reader, I am but one tiny fish in the great ocean of chess. Please don't do as I do, do as I say or the sharks will have you.

Well, here's the game.

**C.Portman-K.Nicholas**
Buckinghamshire vs Oxfordshire
2006
*Colle Opening*

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 c5 3 e3 d5 4 c3**

I figured that a Colle was as good as anything. Nice and steady, and let's at least not go home early – that's too embarrassing.

**4...e6 5 ♗d3**

Of course, White is trying to provoke Black into playing ...c4 which is terribly committal and leaves White to play e3-e4 at some point, undermining the pawn chain. There are other lines later where White can put a bishop on b1, a queen on c2 and aim for h7 and the castled king, if he can also target the knight defender at f6.

**5...♕c7**

This move is not played all that often. The question is why play it now? Answers on a postcard please.

**6 ♘bd2 b6**

A bit of a rarity. Is the bishop coming to a6 or the b7-square?

**7 0-0**

The first few moves of the Colle System virtually play themselves, and this is what I am telling my student, but we must, of course, remain wary of move order tricks and traps.

**7...♗b7**

Not 7...♗a6?? (oops!) 8 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 9 ♕a4+.

**8 ♖e1 ♘c6 9 b3**

It has turned into a Colle-Zukertort System where White wants to fianchetto the queen's bishop on b2.

**9...♗e7 10 ♗b2**

I accept that the Colle may not be the sexiest chess opening, but you might do well to appreciate the fact that it has the ability to show its true colours if the opportunity arises. Sudden kingside attacks are possible.

**10...♘e4?**

I simply don't believe this move. It must be bad. What does it gain after all? It loses a pawn for an unclear attack. Perhaps he was over confident – he arrived ten minutes late after all.

**11 ♘xe4 dxe4 12 ♗xe4**

I mean, isn't White simply better here?

**12...f5**

The impetuosity of youth – for my opponent was indeed a polite young man. Surely Black needed to castle and complete one of the fundamental principles of chess in the opening. If the queens were not on the board, it might be acceptable, but the foot soldiers around Black's king keep on vacating the squares around their master. I wonder what Caissa would have to say about it.

**13 ♗d3 g5?!**

Dubious to say the least. It is, however, a perfectly legitimate strategy. If a Saturday afternoon spent throwing pawns down a board at some nervy king, is an idea of fun, that's fine by me. Maybe he had somewhere else to go and just thought 'alles oder gar nichts'.

**14 dxc5?**

I had a long think. This was not clever. I did not want to risk the attack after 14 ♘xg5, so I thought I would ruin his pawn structure. However, 14 e4 was much better here.

14 ♘xg5 ♗xg5 15 ♕h5+ ♕f7 16 ♕xg5 ♖g8 is what I was really worried about. The pressure on g2 from the rook on g8 and bishop on b7 is significant. After 17 ♕h4 ♖xg2+ 18 ♔xg2 ♘e5+ 19 ♔f1 ♘xd3 20 ♖ed1 (20 ♖eb1 f4, with more active play for Black, I didn't fancy at all) 20...♘xb2 21 ♖d2 White is still better, yet obviously I could not see this far into the game.

**14...bxc5**

Here I was desperate to get ♕h5+ in. I also analysed the move 15 ♗c4, but there was only one thing for it as I wanted to play for a win. I had to keep that king in the centre and open up some lines. Fortune favours the brave, after all. Looking at the position cold, one can observe that the black king in the centre is a target for tactics and simple chess themes such as opening up files and diagonals.

**15 ♘d4?!**

This is not best, and I knew it, but look, I am human, not *Stockfish*. My apologies to the knight, but you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs.

**15...cxd4 16 ♕h5+ ♔f8?!**

Almost certainly the worst of the options. Koichi said after the game that he did not fancy going on to the d-file as I could open up very dangerous lines. I gave away one of my steeds, but his king can no longer benefit from castling. It is game on.

**17 ♕h6+ ♔f7 18 exd4**

White has tremendous compensation for the sacrificed knight.

**18...♘d8**

*One of Carl's favourites, Edgard Colle (right) in action against Alekhine at Paris in 1925.*

I was suitably pleased here. I have reduced my opponent to moving his knight on to the back rank and was calling the shots.

**19 d5!**

Of course. One of the many tasks of a pawn is to spearhead an attack, opening the way knowing that they may never reach the eighth rank – or even need to.

**19...♗f6 20 dxe6+ ♘xe6 21 ♕h5+**

21 ♖xe6! ♔xe6 22 ♗c4+ is very strong.

**21...♔g7 22 ♖xe6**

Two pawns up and looking good. I just need to remain calm.

**22...♕f7**

Pretty much forced, but why? There is too much white artillery around and aimed at the black king.

**23 ♕xf7+ ♔xf7**

Now here, I knew I could have played 24 ♗xf5, but I wanted to travel the easiest route to victory and swap material off down to the bare bones. I was confident that two pawns up, I could do this.

**24 ♖xf6+**

After 24 ♗xf5 ♖he8 25 ♖ae1 ♖xe6 26 ♗xe6+ ♔g6 27 f3 the game goes on.

**24...♔xf6 25 c4+ ♔g6 26 ♗xh8 ♖xh8 27 g4 ♖d8**

Desperation.

**28 ♗xf5+ ♔f6 29 ♖e1**

There is no need to be greedy and take the h-pawn. Developing the rook first seems sensible to me.

**29...h5 30 h3**

The engine likes 30 c5, but honestly who would play this? Would you, dear reader?

**30...♖d2 31 ♗e4 ♗c8**

Black needed to take, but he is just trying to wait for a cheapo.

**32 gxh5 ♗xh3 33 h6 ♖d8 34 h7 ♖e8 35 f3 ♔g7 36 ♔f2 1-0**

And Black resigned. I was delighted to win this game. I played it carefully and solidly, and capitalised when my opponent took risks. I had seven minutes left at time control, and my opponent had 19. There was therefore, plenty of time to finish the fight. I admired Black's optimism with his attacking play, but the phrase 'keep your king safe at all times' has never been so relevant as here.

I have enjoyed many games playing the Colle Opening, even having two published in *The Dogs of War: Practical Play in the Colle System*, written by Teresa and David Hatch in 1995. Whilst I am on the subject of this opening, I must mention Edgard Colle, the inventor of the system. I believe that it is important to include in homework for any student some questions about chess history and personalities. I mean, people learning the game really should know who the pioneers were.

If I asked you what nationality Colle was, would you know? How did he die? When was his opening first employed? Well, this Belgian, born in 1897 died from a gastric ulcer in 1932. His opening was, according to the *Oxford Companion to Chess* first used in the 1890s, but masters began to seriously use it from 1900. It is not at all popular at elite level, mainly because it does not really offer any kind of advantage. Vladimir Kramnik won with the Colle-Zukertort system against Sethuraman in the Isle of Man in 2017. None other than Susan Polgar played and advocated this opening also, therefore it is good enough for me and maybe for you too.

# Chess in the Rising Sun

**Adapting to the restrictions posed by the pandemic, groups of chess players are playing in their local parks. Tim Wall is urging clubs to organise 'Chess in the Park' events across the UK**

*"There is a chess park in old Wallsend,*
*They call the Rising Sun.*
*And it's been the ruin of many a poor boy,*
*And God, I know I'm one."*

**The Animals, *House of the Rising Sun*, City Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne, May 23rd 1964***

Chess in the open air is a bit like some other outdoor activities – it's definitely seasonal, it's best to come prepared, and it's probably over a lot quicker than you anticipated.

While the talk among most of my friends this spring was along the lines of 'When are the beer gardens reopening?', among a smaller sub-set, the buzz was that we could finally get together for a game of al fresco over-the-board chess.

## Not by online chess alone

With online league matches these days ending all-too-often in a mouseslip blunder, a few choice words and more alcohol units than in Bridget Jones' diary, the craving for some real-life plastic-on-rubber 'n' thwack-on-DGT action grows more intense.

In early April – with indoors chess still a few weeks away, according to the UK government's Covid-19 lockdown easing plan – the picnic tables at the Rising Sun Country Park in Wallsend seemed like an inviting option.

## 'We'd play chess anywhere, anytime'

With me on that Sunday afternoon in the park was my former Wallsend team captain, Phil Welsh, who back in the nineties had inducted me into the wild ways of the Rising Sun – not the park, but the pub of the same name, several hundred metres away.

Upstairs is where we quaffed many a pint of Worthington's... and won the Northumberland League. The notorious Rising Sun gang included Dave 'Countdown' Ledger, Jon 'Quiz Machines' Nelson, Jonty 'Blackjack' King and Andy 'Stage Door' Lawson.

We'd play chess anywhere, anytime. On the 19th floor of a city centre, multi-storey tower block to the backrooms of seedy nightclubs, and everywhere in between. Mostly in Tyneside pubs, though.

*Forest Hall Chess Club members enjoying life outside at the Rising Sun Country Park.*

These days, with the passing of the years, and especially with Covid, we're into a more socially distanced chess scene. And that's probably a good thing. Because there's actually never been a better time for chess clubs to 'take it outdoors'.

## A breath of fresh air

For a start, we all need that fresh air in our lungs, a healthy walk and the relaxing real-life chat with friends that we've been missing for the last year. If we can do it with chess, even better.

The pandemic has already changed so many of our pre-lockdown habits, and there has never been a better time to ditch the old one of hidden-away chess clubs, with admittance only granted by knowing the right answer to the secret password question, "What's your ECF grade?".

When we play outdoors in the park, we're visible and accessible. From New York's Washington Square Park to Moscow's Neskuchny Sad (it literally means 'Not-Boring Garden'), chess friends and hustlers alike meet, enjoy a few games and engage in conversation. That social side of chess is what's missing at too many 'hush-hush, please be quiet' old-style chess venues, and definitely missing when we play online from home, left to rage lonely against the machine when the WiFi connection fails and the screen freezes.

## From eight to 88

In the weeks since my current chess club, Forest Hall, started playing outdoors at the Rising Sun Country Park, we've had a wide range of players come along, from literally eight to 88 years young. Sometimes it's sunny, sometimes blustery – and sometimes rain stops play. But we keep coming back.

And I'm pleased to say that a steady

stream of reports is now coming in of other clubs around the country starting up 'Chess in the Park' days.

From York's Rowntrees Park to Wimbledon's Merton Abbey, chess enthusiasts are going outdoors, armed with sets, clocks, gazebos, umbrellas and warm clothes – ready for anything.

### Organise your own 'Chess in the Park'

So, why not get together with a few friends or clubmates, and organise your own 'Chess in the Park' activity? It's the perfect way to recruit new members to your over-the-board chess club after months of online play and to really connect with the community.

Outdoors chess will receive a huge boost this summer with the London Chess Classic Outdoor Festival, organised Friday 16th to Sunday 18th July, and run by Chess in Schools and Communities. The festival will include 1,200 schoolchildren playing 'pop-up' chess in cafes and parks, a 'Mad Hatter's Chess Party', giant chess sets and live video linkups with other cities.

But 'Chess in the Park' doesn't have to start or finish that weekend – it can go on any day, or any weekend, throughout the summer. So, if you would like to organise your own 'Chess in the Park' event and link up with the London Chess Classic Outdoor Festival, please drop me a line to: timpeterwall@gmail.com. I will send you details of 'Chess in the Park' activities in your area, and let you know how you can get involved in the campaign to take chess outdoors across the UK.

**A special re-imagining of 'House of the Rising Sun' was recorded by 'Chess in the Park' Records.*

*Over-the-board chess has also resumed on a smalll scale in Sheffield - see Home News.*

SUBSCRIBE TO **Chess** MAGAZINE AND SAVE **BIG**

**Coverage of ALL major chess tournaments - Interviews with top players - Instructional articles by top players - 3 pages of tactics puzzles every month - Features on Chess History - Chess Studies & Problems - and much more!**

*Established 1935. Contributors include: Michael Adams, Gawain Jones, Daniel King, Danny Gormally, Simon Williams, Jon Speelman, Lorin D'Costa, John Saunders, John Henderson, Carl Portman, Ben Graff and not least our Executive Editor, IM Malcolm Pein.*

**Subscribers can now download an annotated database by email with all the chess from the magazine in an electronic format, completely free of charge! Play through the games & puzzles without setting up a board!**

**SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT WWW.CHESS.CO.UK OR CALL 020 7486 7015**

# Recognition – The 2021 ECF Awards

**The Chairman of the ECF Awards Committee, Stephen Greep, explains all about the awards' new look and how you can nominate an individual or organisation**

May saw the publication of the ECF 2021 Awards Programme. This has been a difficult year for chess, but the ECF Awards offer an opportunity to demonstrate how much amazing work has been going on in such difficult circumstances and for the ECF to recognise this and celebrate success. The awards bring with them a clear statement of intent that they *"Are a way for the ECF to recognise contributions to the promotion and development of chess. They should demonstrate high quality and measure excellence and significant achievement."*

This year the awards have a new look about them. The President's Award for Services to Chess continues to top the list, but there are four new awards reflecting key ECF priorities – Contributions to Accessible, Community, Junior and Women's Chess. These, together with the existing awards of Club and Small Club of the Year, Congress of the Year and Contribution to Online Chess (the latter being introduced last year), make up a series of nine awards that should continue to be the format of the ECF awards for years to come. The award of Magazine of the Year has been discontinued.

The committee has been rebalanced to reflect more diversity with a better gender and age balance, as well as a range of playing skills. The new committee is: Stephen Greep (Chairman), Julie Denning, IM Ameet Ghasi, WFM Sarah Longson, WFM Natasha Regan, IM Jack Rudd and Nigel Towers. I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to three stalwarts of the Awards committee who have made a significant contribution in recent years who have now stepped down, Roger Edwards, Stan Goodall and William Metcalf; also to Mike Truran and Nigel Towers in particular who have helped shaped this new look series of awards.

There is expanded guidance and a list of key criteria that the judges will be particularly looking for when assessing all nominations. The awards are based not on the number of votes but on evidence-based achievements, demonstrated by the citations made. One-line nominations are exceedingly unlikely to win an award and yet last year 20% of all nominations consisted of a single line citation. One nominee received a significant number of remarkably similar one-line nominations. The current guidance makes it particularly clear that these awards are for excellence and must be backed up by solid evidence.

The awards cover the period 1st June 2020 - 31st May 2021, and nominations must be with the committee Chairman, Stephen Greep (sjgreep@gmail.com) no later than 30th June. All the information required to make a nomination for any of the ECF Awards can be found on the ECF website (www.englishchess.org.uk/nominations-invited-for-this-years-ecf-awards).

Apart from a trophy, winners will be able to use the new award logo and will be announced in the ECF newsletter and on the ECF web site (winning citations will also be included in the ECF Yearbook). A list of all the previous winners and winning citations may also be found on the ECF web site (www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards/).

*Graham Bromley with his 2020 President's Award for Services to Chess, but who will win this year? It's time to get nominating!*

*Ed. – We'll hear more from Stephen and discover all the winners later this summer.*


Check Out...

ChessPublishing.com

for the latest in opening theory

Over 29,000 annotated games

Updated on a monthly basis

Written by top opening theoreticians

***"I really like this site and highly recommend it to everyone!" - GM Ruslan Ponomariov***

# Overseas News

**CHINA –** Yu Yangyi scraped home on tiebreak as he retained his title at the Chinese Championship in Xinghua (May 7-15), after finishing on 7/11 along with Wei Yi, whom Yu defeated, and the little-known Li Di. Lu Shanglei was a point adrift, with Ju Wenjun, who defeated Yu in the final round, a further point back and notably not participating in the Women's Championship. That went to top seed Tan Zhongyi, who racked up 8½/11, despite losing two games, to edge out by half a point two future stars, the teenagers Ning Kaiyu and Zhu Jiner.

**HOLLAND –** Magnus Carlsen has finally won a tournament in the Meltwater Champions Chess Tour, after triumphing at the New in Chess Classic on Chess 24 (April 24 - May 2). Whilst most of the chess world was initially busy enjoying the Candidates, the world champion ran out a worthy winner, topping the initial all-play-all with 10½/15 ahead of knocking out Teimour Radjabov, Levon Aronian and Hikaru Nakamura to pocket the $30,000 first prize.

We'll have a full report next month. Do note too that the next leg of the Champions Tour will take place June 26th until July 4th. Until then, let's enjoy some Carlsen positional brilliance from his topsy-turvy semi-final encounter with his future challenger from his own signature event back in late March.

**M.Carlsen-I.Nepomniachtchi**
Magnus Carlsen Invitational 2021
*Sicilian Najdorf*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 a4 e5 7 ♘f3 h6 8 g3!?**

Until recently, this was pretty rare at this point, but it's by no means illogical.

**8...♗e7 9 ♗g2 0-0**

An attempted improvement, Black having come under pressure, eventually losing after 9...♘c6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e1 ♖b8 12 b3 b5 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♘d5 in Giri-Nepomniachtchi, Opera Euro Rapid 2021.

**10 0-0 ♗e6 11 ♘h4!?**

White's most ambitious approach and now Black needed to cross his plans with 11...♗g4! when, for instance, 12 ♕d3 (12 f3 ♗e6 would obstruct the bishop on g2 and 12 ♗f3 ♗h3 13 ♖e1 ♘c6 14 ♘f5 ♖c8 also feels OK for Black) 12...♘c6 13 h3 ♗e6 should offer Black enough counterplay with ideas of ...♖c8 and ...♘b4 or even ...♘d4 on the way.

**11...♘bd7?! 12 ♘f5 ♗xf5?!**

Matters go from bad to worse for Black. As was pointed out by Sicilian expert, Michael Roiz, gambitting a pawn with 12...♖c8! 13 ♘xd6 ♖c7 14 ♘f5 ♗b4 would at least have given Black some play.

**13 exf5 ♕c7 14 a5! ♖ab8 15 ♗e3**

White has clamped down on the queenside and his bishops rule the roost.

**15...♖fc8 16 ♕d3 ♗f8 17 ♖fc1 b6?**

Matters were grim, but there was no need to give White a pawn and the a-file.

**18 axb6 ♘xb6 19 ♖xa6 ♘c4**

The point of Black's play, but he won't even manage to capture on b2.

**20 ♘d5 ♕d8**

This retreat sums up how bad things have quickly become, but even after 20...♘xd5 21 ♗xd5 ♘xe3? (not 21...♖xb2? 22 ♖a7 and 21...♘xb2? 22 ♕e4 also spells light-square ruin) 22 ♕xe3 ♕d7 23 ♖a7 ♖c7 24 ♖xc7 ♕xc7 25 b3 White's queenside majority and far superior bishop would have left him with a fairly straightforward task.

**21 b3 ♘xe3 22 ♕xe3 ♖c5 23 c4 ♕c8**

**24 ♘xf6+**

And why not? The presence of opposite-coloured bishops is about to favour the attacker.

**24...gxf6 25 ♖a7! ♕xf5 26 ♗d5 ♕g5 27 ♖b1 ♕xe3 28 fxe3 ♖b4 29 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 30 ♗d5 ♖c8 31 ♔g2 ♖cb8 32 ♖f7 ♗g7 33 ♖a1 1-0**

Talk about meister gegen amateur, but Nepomniachtchi can, of course, do much better, as he demonstrated elsewhere in this mini-match and the resulting blitz play-off.

*Magnus Carlsen finally had plenty to smile about as he won the New in Chess Classic.*

**HUNGARY –** 12-year-old New Jersey IM Abhimanyu Mishra has made two GM norms back to back in Budapest. The first one arrived at the Vezerkepzo GM (14-25 April), where Mishra tied for first with 13-year-old Indian Souhardo Basak on 7/9; the second occurred at the famous First Saturday tournament (1-11 May), which the New Jersey youngster dominated, racking up 8/9 to finish some three points clear of IM Issa Rafat and top seed Vojtech Plat. If Mishra can secure a third norm before September 4th while improving his rating from 2471 to 2500, he will replace Sergey Karjakin as the youngest grandmaster of all time.

*An impressive winner in Budapest. Will Abhimanyu Mishra now become the youngest-ever GM?*

**POLAND** – The Polish Championships took place in Bydgoszcz (April 28 - May 8). The Open was a 32-player knockout, in which Radoslaw Wojtaszek defeated Wojciech Moranda 2½-1½ in the final. In contrast, the Women's Championship was a 10-player all-play-all and won by Celtic Tigers star IM Klaudia Kulon.

**RUSSIA** – The Russian Team Championships took place in Sochi (May 1-10), and were dominated by Mednyy Vsadnik, the Bronze Horseman from St. Petersburg, who won all eight matches. The silver medals, back on 13/16, went to the team from Moscow, who went one better in the Women's Team Championship, largely thanks to an impressive 6½/7 from Kateryna Lagno on top board.

19-year-old Andrey Esipenko also made a huge '+6' for Mednyy Vsadnik, which has seen how rating soar to 2716, making him the world no. 26, one place above Michael Adams. Esipenko's team mates also impressed, losing just one game between them, with Nikita Vitiugov, Maxim Matlakov and Kirill Alekseenko generally solid on the top boards, while lower down Vladimir Fedoseev chipped in with 6/7. Matlakov got to produce the most elegant if rather one-sided game of the tournament.

**M.Matlakov-A.Truskavetsky**
Mednyy Vasnik vs Cimmeria
*Sicilian Rossolimo*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 e6 4 0-0 ♘ge7 5 d4!?**

A modern twist.

**5...cxd4 6 ♘xd4 ♕b6**

6...♘xd4 7 ♕xd4 ♘c6 8 ♕c3 leaves Black struggling to develop and ideas of ♗h6 on the horizon.

**7 ♘xc6 bxc6 8 ♗d3 ♘g6 9 c4 ♗e7 10 ♘c3 0-0 11 ♘a4!? ♕c7 12 c5 e5?!**

Clamping down, although now 12...d5! 13 cxd6 ♗xd6 14 g3 ♘e5 15 ♗e2 c5 seemed OK for Black in Xiong-Swiercz, Internet (blitz) 2021. Instead, the Russian IM pushes the wrong pawn.

**13 ♗e3 ♘f4?!**

13...d5 14 cxd6 ♕xd6 15 ♗e2 is a pleasant edge for White, but the text simply doesn't work.

**14 ♗c4 ♖d8 15 ♕f3 ♘e6 16 ♖fd1 ♖b8 17 b3**

**17...♗f6?**

It was the final chance for 17...d6, grim though 18 ♖ac1 dxc5 19 ♘xc5! would have been.

**18 ♕g3 ♘f4 19 ♖d6 ♗e7 20 ♖ad1!**

Black has got himself into a right pickle and now won't be allowed to break free.

**20...♗xd6? 21 cxd6 ♕b7 22 ♕g5 ♖e8 23 ♕e7!**

Neat as White would, of course, promote after 23...♖xe7 24 dxe7.

**23...♖f8 24 ♕xe5 ♘e6 25 f4! ♔h8 26 f5 f6**

**27 fxe6!**

A second and even more stunning queen sacrifice.

**27...fxe5 28 e7 ♖e8 29 ♖f1 1-0**

There's just nothing to be done about the threat of 30 ♖f8+.

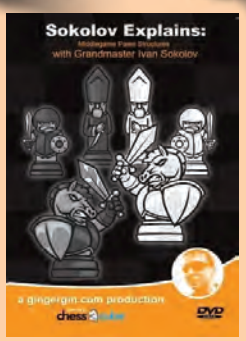
♘ ♘ ♘ ♘ ♘ ♘ ♘ ♘ ♘ ♘ ♘ ♘


DISCOUNT DVDs FROM
GINGER GM
– UP TO 80% OFF – JUST £5 EACH

Improve Your Practical Play
Danny Gormally - 6 hours
WAS £24.95 NOW £5

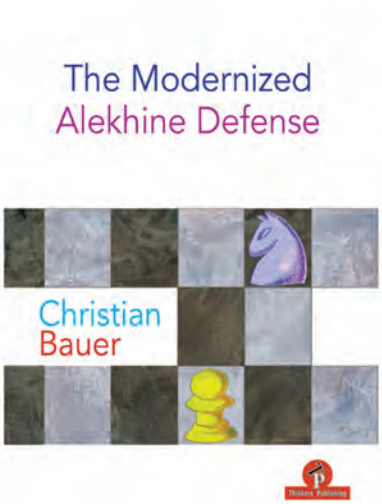
Killer Grand Prix
Gawain Jones - 5 hrs 30 mins
WAS £24.95 NOW £5

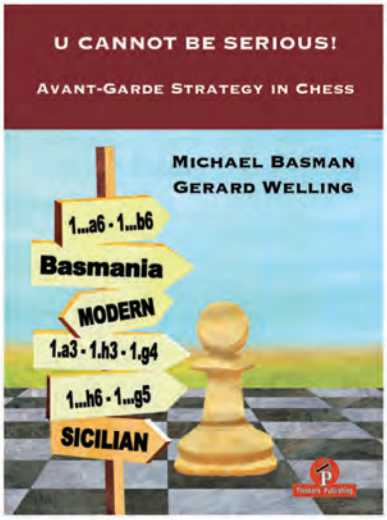
Plaskett's Greatest Hits
James Plaskett - 3 hrs 30 mins
WAS £24.95 NOW £5



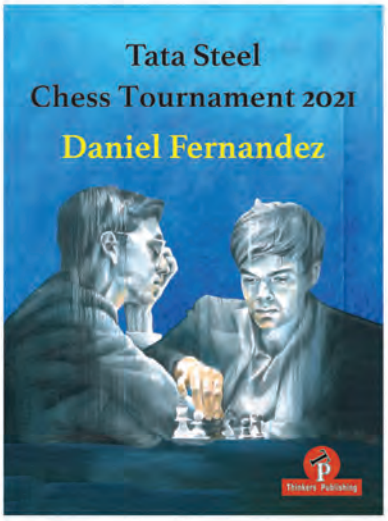

Sokolov Explains: Middlegame Pawn Structures - 3 hrs 45 mins
WAS £24.95 NOW £5

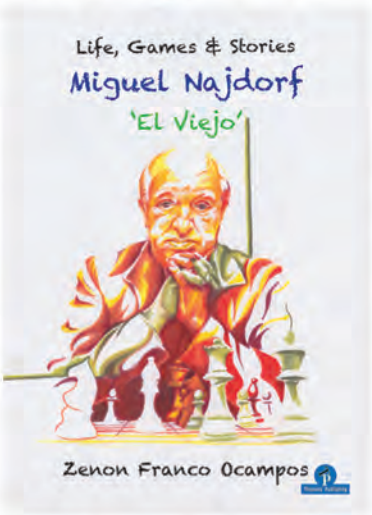
ORDER ONLINE: CHESS.CO.UK OR BY CALLING 020 7486 7015



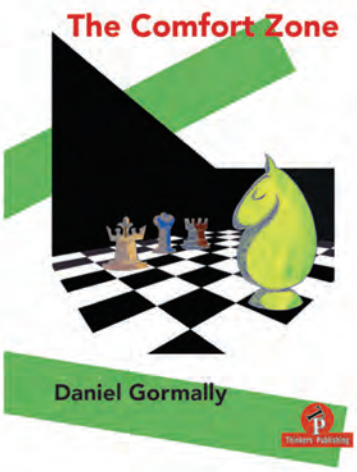



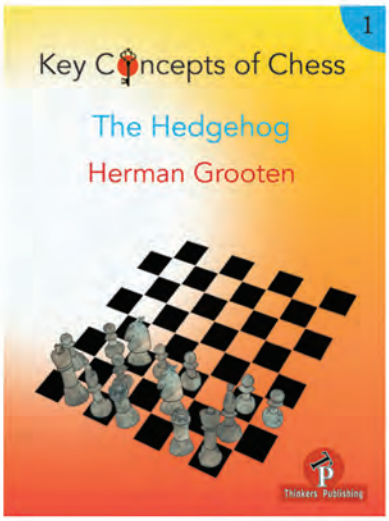
# www.thinkerspublishing.com

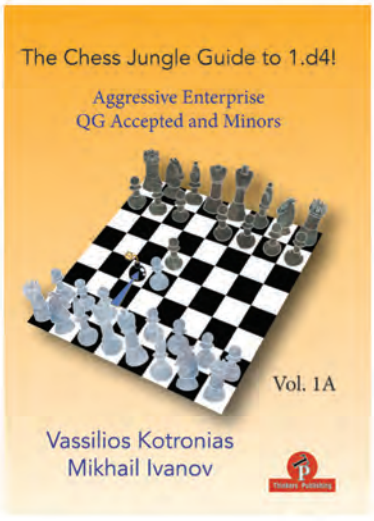


# Always One Move Ahead!



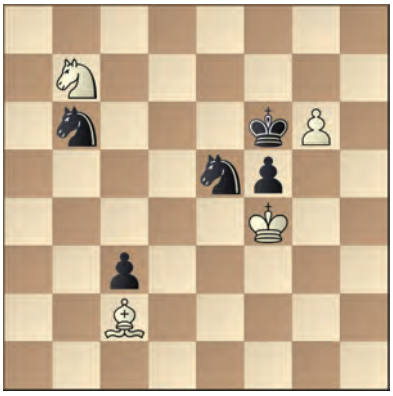



# Home News

**4NCL** – Chessable White Rose I were the only side to finish on 100% in the pool stage of the top division in the 4NCL Online League. They are yet to lose a match over three seasons of the league, but were eliminated on board count by Guildford Young Guns in the semi-final following a 2-2 draw.

After racking up 6/6 and showing that even at 63 he is still very much a force to be reckoned with, Mark Hebden was defeated by James Adair in a wild encounter. However, Matthew Wadsworth continued his fine form as he held Gawain Jones with the black pieces on top board, while Alberto Suarez Real took advantage of a rare blunder from Christof Sielecki on board 2. Guildford were also a little fortunate on board 4 where Kamil Plichta was unable to convert an endgame two pawns to the good against Harry Grieve.

**H.Grieve-K.Plichta**
Guildford vs Chessable White Rose



To win, Black must ensure he can retain a pawn. To that end, 70...♘d5+! 71 ♔g3 f4+! 72 ♔f2 ♘e3 was the way to go, because after 73 ♗e4 c2 74 ♗xc2 ♘xc2 75 ♘d6 ♔xg6 White shouldn't be able to sacrifice his knight for the f-pawn.

**70...♘xg6+? 71 ♔e3 ♔e5**

Black is also unable to win after 71...f4+ 72 ♔d4 f3 73 ♔xc3 f2 74 ♗d3 and 71...♘d5+ 72 ♔d4 ♘ge7 73 ♘d6.

**72 ♗xf5!**

The right approach and somewhat simpler than allowing 72 ♔d3 ♘d5 73 ♘c5 ♘gf4+ 74 ♔c4 ♘e2, even if this should be drawn too.

**72...♘d5+!?**

Trying to keep some chances alive, since 72...♔xf5 73 ♔d3 ♘d5 74 ♘d6+ ♔e5 75 ♘b5 ♘gf4+ 76 ♔c2 followed by 77 ♘xc3 would, of course, just be a draw.

**73 ♔d3 ♘gf4+ 74 ♔c2 ♔d4 75 ♘d6 ♘e3+ 76 ♔b3 ♘xf5 77 ♘b5+!**

Even simpler than 77 ♘xf5+ ♔d3 78 ♘e3!.

**77...♔d3 78 ♘xc3 ♘d4+ 79 ♔b4 ♘fe6 80 ♘d5 ♔e4 81 ♘c3+ ♔e5 82 ♔c4 ♔d6 83 ♘b5+ ♘xb5 84 ♔xb5 ½-½**

We'll bring you details of the final between Guildford and Celtic Tigers & Sharks next month, the Tigers & Sharks having proved too strong for Chessable White Rose II in the semi-finals, Peter Roberson and Mark Kvetny doing the damage with the white pieces against Tim Wall and Graeme Oswald.

Meanwhile FM Terry Chapman outplayed Freddy Gordon as he proved too strong for the opposition in the 7th 4NCL Online Congress (April 23-25).

**Open**: 1 Terry Chapman (Cavendish) 4½/5, 2-3 Chris Davison (Cambridge), Marija Kuznecova (Latvia) 4.

**Under-2000**: 1-3 Srihari Iyengar (Northampton), Dillan Duke (Hereford), Chris Evans (Banbury) 4.

**Under-1700**: 1-2 Alastair Marston (Bristol), Aneesh Sagar (Petts Wood) 4½, 3-5 Anshul Swamy (Merthyr Tydfil), Colin Vernon (Worcester), Aniruddha Katkar (London) 4.

**Under-1400**: 1 Kotryna Miskinyte (Manchester) 5, 2 Mark McWilliams (Enfield) 4, 3-5 Angelo Lynn (Kirkintilloch), Bora Aydin (Maidenhead), Shaun Walsh (Bristol) 3½.

**Under-1100**: 1 Archie Piatt (Lancing) 5, 2 Kostya Vitvitskyi (St Albans) 3½.

**BATTLE –** A quick reminder that the ECF's Checkmate Covid – The Rematch chess marathon will take place from 5pm on Saturday 5th of June until 5pm on Sunday June 6th, once again raising money for the British Red Cross. Danny Rosenbaum has also organised the ECF Chess for All Festival (May 30th - June 4th), featuring a combination of online tournaments and group coaching for those of beginner and improver levels. See www.englishchess.org.uk for further details.

**SHEFFIELD** – As over-the-board chess slowly begins to resume (congresses are even back on the menu - see the 4NCL's fine work, right), kudos to Sheffield organiser Geoff Brown who staged two four-player events on Sunday 25th April, a pilot for some larger outdoor tournaments Geoff has planned as restrictions ease.

Jonathan Arnott won all three games at the Millowners Arms event, while at Yellow Arch Studios Geoff Brown himself shared first place with Darnall & Handsworth clubmate Ian Barker. Local businessman Liam Bardell commented that "It was great to be able to use my venues for this event, supporting and encouraging local chess."

Can you see here how Craig Chatterton, White to move here, might have turned the tables on eventual winner Arnott?

White might block with 33 ♖e4, but much stronger is 33 ♖a8+! ♗xa8 34 ♕xa8+ ♔d7 (unsurprisingly 34...♔c7 35 ♖e7+ ♔d6 36 ♘f5+ leads to mate) 35 ♕b7+ when Black must either lose his knight to a fork or be mated by 35...♔d6 36 ♘f5+ ♔c5 37 b4#.

Tim Wall makes a good case for outdoor chess elsewhere in these pages and on top of his sterling work in the north-east, we've also been delighted to see in recent weeks Wimbledon Chess Club regularly taking chess out into their local community. As your Editor can attest, a small group of players competing in a park or pub garden is likely to attract some interest and can easily lead in time to a regular new member or three for your club.


25TH 4NCL CONGRESS

Friday 9 July to Sunday 11 July

to be held at Woodland Grange Hotel, Leamington Spa, CV32 6RN

3 sections - all of 5 rounds

FIDE-Rated Open,
FIDE-Rated Under 2000,
Under 1700

Prize fund and trophies to be announced

For further information visit:

www.4ncl.co.uk

# Solutions

## to Find the Winning Moves (pages 40-42)

**1) Brady-Shafi**
**1 ♘xd4! ♗b7** (1...cxd4? 2 ♗g2 picks up the exchange for insufficient compensation) **2 ♘f3** simply netted a clear pawn.

**2) Venkatesan-Fletcher**
**1 ♕xf8+! ♔h7** (or 1...♔xf8 2 ♖xc8+ ♕e8 3 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 4 e4 with an extra piece) **2 ♖xc8 ♖xd5 3 ♕g8+ ♔g6 4 ♖c6+ f6 5 f5+ ♔h5 6 ♕f7+ 1-0**

**3) Firouzja-Artemiev**
**1 ♖xh6! gxh6 2 ♕g6+ ♔h8 3 ♕xh6+ ♔g8 4 ♕g6+** would have forced perpetual, whereas 1 ♔xg2?? ♕d5+ 2 ♖e4 ♖cd8 forced resignation in the game.

**4) Samimi-Alizadeh**
**1...b3! 2 ♗c4** (now it's stalemate, but 2 ♔d2 bxa2 3 ♗xa2 ♔xf4 leaves White with the wrong coloured rook's pawn) **2...bxa2 3 ♗xa2 ½-½**

**5) Katkov-Lian**
**1 ♖xd7! ♕xd7 2 ♖h3 h6?** (2...♕xh3 would prolong but not save the game after 3 ♕xh3 e4 4 ♗c2) **3 ♗xh6 ♕f5 4 ♗g5# 1-0**

**6) NN-Lawson**
**1...♘xe4! 2 ♗xe7?** (2 ♘xe4 ♕xe4+ 3 ♕e2 was better) **2...♗xf2+ 3 ♔e2 ♘f4# 0-1**

**7) Lenderman-Guseinov**
**1 ♘xf5! ♗xf5 2 ♗xf5+ ♔xf5 3 ♕b1+ ♘e4+ 4 ♔f3 ♕g8 5 ♕xe4+ ♔f6 6 ♔f2** left White a pawn ahead in the queen ending and after **6...h4!** he might have won with **7 ♔e2! ♕c8 8 f5! ♕xf5 9 ♕xh4+** followed by exchanging queens, as pointed out by the ever-thorough Glenn Flear in his excellent ChessPublishing column.

**8) Corr-Milligan**
White is winning after 1 ♖da1, but somewhat more clinical is the neat **1 ♖xd2! ♕xd2 2 ♘f3** when Black cannot both preserve his queen and prevent the threat of 3 ♕xc7.

**9) Pyda-Sielecki**
**1...♘xh3!** (1...♗xh3!? 2 gxh3 ♘xh3 also wins, but still leaves Black with work to do after 3 ♗h2) **2 gxh3 ♗xh3 3 ♗xh3 ♕xh3+ 4 ♗h2 ♘h4! 5 ♕d3 g2+ 6 ♔g1 ♘xf3+ 7 ♔f2 ♕xh2 0-1**

**10) Whitehead-'BenyaminGz'**
**1 ♔e2!** wins in view of **1...♘d4+ 2 ♔d3 ♖fe8 3 ♗xf7+! ♕xf7 4 ♖h8+ ♔xh8 5 ♕xf7**, whereas the game's 1 ♔f1?? might have allowed Black to turn the tables with the fiendish 1...♕e4! and 1 ♔d1? ♘g5 defends.

**11) Giri-Nepomniachtchi**
Black won after 1 ♗xe6? g6 2 f5 ♔f8! 3 fxg6 fxe6 4 ♖d1 a3 5 ♕f3+ ♗f5 6 b3 ♕xe5+ 0-1, but **1 ♗f5!** would have left him scrambling to set up a fortress with **1...♕xg1+ 2 ♕xg1 ♗xf5 3 ♕d4** and even this shouldn't be sufficient in the long term since White will obtain a passed pawn on the queenside.

**12) Roberts-Savage**
**1 ♖xc6+! bxc6** (if 1...♔b8 2 ♖c8+! ♔xc8 3 ♕xb7# and 1...♔d7 2 ♖d6+ ♔e8 3 ♕xb7 also leads to mate) **2 ♕xc6+ ♕c7 3 ♕a6+ ♔d7 4 ♖b7 ♔c8 5 ♖xa7+ ♔b8 6 ♖a8# 1-0**

**13) Ben Ari-Rechlis**
1 ♗xc6? bxc6? (1...♗xc6+ 2 ♖xc6 bxc6 3 d7 ♗f6 would save the day) 2 ♕g5? ♕e4+ 3 ♔h2 ♗h3! left White fortunate that he was able to salvage half a point: 4 f3! ♕xf3 5 ♖xg7+! ♔xg7 6 ♕e7+ ♕f7 7 ♔xh3 ♕xe7 8 dxe7 ♔f7 9 g4 ♔xe7 10 gxh5 gxh5 11 ♔g3 ♔e6 12 ♔f4 ½-½. However, **1 ♕g5!** would have won, as pointed out by Yochanan Afek, as **1...♕h3+ 2 ♔g1 ♘e5 3 ♖xb7** leaves Black out of any real swindling chances.

**14) Haitovich-Levitan**
**1 ♖xf8+! ♔xf8 2 ♕xd6+ ♔f7** (or 2...♔e8 3 ♕e6+ when the loose rook drops off after a check on f5 or 3...♔d8 4 ♗b6+) **3 ♕d7+ ♔f8** (if 3...♔g6 4 ♕e6+ ♔h5 5 ♕f5+ ♔h6 6 ♕g5#) **4 ♕f5+ 1-0**

**15) Wheeler-Gabuzyan**
**1 ♗xf4!** (even stronger than 1 b4!? cxb3 2 ♕d3) **1...♘f5?** (1...exf4? 2 ♕e6+ picks up a piece and even 1...♖e8 2 ♗g3 should really be winning, as with 2...d4 3 ♖xd6! ♕xd6 4 ♕xc4+ ♕e6 5 ♕b5 when the a-pawn should prove too strong) **2 ♖xf6! ♖xf6 3 ♕xe5** (the d-pawn is falling and with it the game) **3...♖f8 4 ♕e6+ ♔g7 5 ♖xd5 ♖e8 6 ♕e5+ 1-0**

**16) Carlsen-So**
**1 ♖e3!** (1 ♗h6 ♖e7 2 ♖e3! and 1 ♕g6+ ♔f8 2 ♖e3! do the trick too) **1...♔f8** (1...fxg5 2 ♗xd5+ cxd5 3 ♕g6+ ♔f8 4 ♖h3 forces mate) **2 ♕g6! f4 3 ♗h6+ ♔e7 4 ♕h7+ 1-0** If 4...♔e6 5 ♖xe4#.

**17) Wojtaszek-Matlakov**
**1 ♕xe6!** (1 ♕f7+? ♘g7 2 ♗e3 ♕d1+ 3 ♔h2 ♕d7 was unsurprisingly hopeless for White in the game) **1...♕xc1+ 2 ♔g2 ♕xa3** (2...♕xc3 3 e5! ♕c4 4 ♕e7+ ♔g8 5 e6! results in perpetual check too) **3 ♕f7+ ♔h8 4 ♕f6+ ♔g8 5 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 6 ♕xh6+ ♔e8 7 ♕g6+ ♔d7 8 ♕f5+ ♔d8** sees Black dodging the checks, but after **9 h4** he won't be able to easily halt the h-pawn and White has sufficient play for the piece.

**18) Perez Ponsa-Gunina**
**1...♖e3!** is remarkably the only way to win, whereas in the game White saved the day thanks to stalemate: 1...♖b6? 2 ♕xb6+! ♔xb6 ½-½.

**19) Ben Ari-Kupervaser**
After 1...♕xf5+ 2 ♕e4 ♕xe4+ 3 ♖xe4 Black needed to find 3...a3! to be able to win, denying White connected passed pawns and so making matters fairly straightforward, as with 4 b4 d5 5 ♖e3 e4 6 ♔c2 ♖b6 7 ♖xa3 ♖xb4 8 ♖a7 ♔xh6 9 ♖xf7 d4 (Afek). Stronger, though, would have been the immediate **1...a3!**, which is a decisive zwischenzug and leaves Black easily winning after **2 bxa3 ♕xf5+ 3 ♕e4** (or 3 ♕c2 e4) **3...♕xe4+ 4 ♖xe4 ♔xh6 5 a4 d5 6 ♖b4 d4 7 a5 ♔g5** (Afek), when the connected central passed pawns will sweep all before them.

**20) Idle-Freeman**
**1 ♘c7!** (improving the worst-placed piece!) **1...♔xg6 2 ♗h3! ♔f7** (now the connected passed pawns are too strong and 2...♗a4 3 d6 is also hopeless, as is even 2...♗f6 3 ♗xd7 ♗xe7 4 ♗a4, since Black is playing without his knight) **3 d6 ♗c6 4 ♗e6+ ♔f6 5 ♗d5 ♗d7 6 e8♕ ♗xe8 7 ♘xe8+ 1-0**

**21) Grandelius-Mikhalevski**
**1...♕f4!** (1...♕e1 2 ♔h2 ♕e5+ 3 ♔h1 was preferred in the game when Black should have transposed with 3...♕f4!, although he only blew the win with 3...♔g5 4 ♗h2 ♕e1+ 5 ♗g1 ♔f4 6 ♔h2 ♕e2 7 ♔h1 ♔g3 8 ♗h2+ ♔f2 9 ♗g1+ ♔e1? when, as pointed out by Victor Mikhalevski, 10 ♗d4 was one way to draw, leaving White with a fortress) **2 ♗b6** (White is in zugzwang and is again after 2 ♗h2 ♕c1+ 3 ♗g1 ♔g3 when only the light-squared bishop can move and 4 ♗d5 ♕f1! is trivial, while even 2 ♗d5 ♔xh3 3 ♗e6+ ♔h4! is a fairly easy win, as with 4 ♗d5 ♕d2 5 ♗g2 ♔g4 6 ♔h2 h4) **2...♔g3! 3 ♔g1** (3 ♗a7 ♕c1+ 4 ♗g1 h4 again forces the light-squared bishop to move with fatal consequences) **3...♕c1+ 4 ♗f1 ♕c2** forces checkmate.

**22) So-Firouzja**
**1...♔d7!** (1...♔d6? came up short in the game as after 2 ♔h6! ♔e7 Black lacked a check on the second rank: 3 ♔g7 ♔e6 4 g6 ♔f5 5 h4 ♖a7+ 6 ♔h6 ♖a6 7 ♔h7! ♖a4 8 h5 ♔g5 9 g7 1-0) **2 ♔h6** (or 2 g6 ♔e7 3 ♔g5 ♔f8 4 h4 ♔g7 when Black's king has made it across in time) **2...♔e8** and now if 3 g6 ♔f8 or 3 ♔g7 ♖a7+ 4 ♔g8 ♔e7 5 h4 ♔e6 when it becomes clear that White won't be able to win.

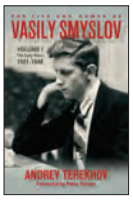
**23) Gordon-Arkell**
1...♖xa4? 2 ♔g1! ♔xg3 3 f6 saw White able to save the day, but **1...♖h2!** (1...♖f2+! and 1...♖g2! also work) would have won, and if **2 ♔g1 ♖g2+ 3 ♔h1 ♖xg3 4 ♖f1+** (or 4 f6 ♔f2! 5 ♔h2 e2 6 f7 ♖f3) **4...♔e2 5 ♖f4 ♖f3!**.

**24) Vidit-Mamedyarov**
Black was able to rescue half a point after 1 ♖xd6+? ♔xe5 2 ♖a6 (2 ♖d7 f5 3 h4 was

a better try when Black would have had to have found 3...♔e6!, and if 4 ♖g7 ♔d5, as pointed out by Justin Tan) 2...♔d5 3 ♔d3 ♔c5 4 ♖a1 ♔b6 5 ♔c4 ♖xa7 6 ♖xa7 ♔xa7 7 ♔xb4 ♔b6 8 ♔c4 ♔c6 9 ♔d4 ½-½.

However, **1 ♘c6! ♘c8 2 ♖b7** would have won, even after **2...b3! 3 ♔d3!** (or 3 ♔f4!) **3...♔g7** (3...♘xa7 4 ♘xa7 ♖h8 is a better try, if still gradually winning for White after 5 h4 g5 6 h5! ♖xh5 7 ♔e4!, as given by Tan on ChessPublishing) **4 ♖b8 b2!?** (4...♘xa7 5 ♖xa8 ♘xc6 6 ♖a3 ♘e5+ 7 ♔e2! is also a technical win) **5 ♖xb2 ♘xa7 6 ♖a2** and White wins material since he's preventing the check on d8.

# This Month's New Releases




**The Life and Games of Vasily Smyslov: Volume I**
Andrey Terekhov, 536 pages
Russell Enterprises
RRP £32.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £29.65**

Subtitled 'The Early Years 1921-1948', this magnificent labour of love displays the seventh world champion's early life in chess as it has never been known before. Smyslov won the world championship in 1957. Thereafter, in his series of classic books, he curated an image of his own play as governed by harmony, clarity, and endgame mastery. Valuable though Smyslov's own writings are, FM Andrey Terekhov paints a different and no less fascinating portrait of the early Smyslov.

The book consists of a series of biographical chapters interspersed by 49 deeply annotated games, further fragments, and appendices on Smyslov's opening and endgame play (the latter contributed by GM Karsten Müller). Terekhov's work is remarkable both in range and depth. For comparison, he covers in 536 pages the period of Smyslov's career that Kasparov in *My Great Predecessors* deals with in just 10.

Quoting many magazine and newspaper commentaries that reflected on the extraordinary speed of his rise to the top, Terekhov shows that the young Smyslov was known primarily as a creative and even impetuous attacking player. Terekhov draws on Smyslov's own archive and countless other sources to present fresh material on every page, beginning with the topic of Smyslov's family.

Such is Terekhov's attention to detail – and to human interest – that we even read a selection of fanmail from female students when Smyslov first achieved fame in the chess-obsessed Soviet Union. The author gives lucid, well-documented accounts of chess politics, too. For instance, we learn of the context in which Botvinnik, disappointed by his poor result in the 1940 USSR Championship when Smyslov finished strongly in third place, manoeuvred to arrange an 'Absolute' USSR Championship the following year.

Tournament tables and a fine selection of photographs adorn the book throughout. The bibliography is excellent. Terekhov's treatment of Smyslov's games is no less impressive than his reconstruction of Smyslov's early career. The games tend to be prefaced by pen-portraits of Smyslov's opponents, which bring the encounters to life. Some of the games are well known, but a few are published here for the first time. Others were published in Soviet magazines, but then forgotten. Terekhov frequently draws on manuscript annotations that Smyslov left unpublished and has also tracked down many notes by other annotators.

Using all the past annotations at his disposal together with *Stockfish*, Terekhov seeks the 'truth' about each game. This results in lengthy annotations at times, but also in top-quality analysis and impressive discoveries. I turned at once to Smyslov's games with Black against Fridstein (Moscow 1944/5) and Reshevsky (USSR-USA radio match 1945), which I had studied when I wrote my book *Play the Slav*. Here I found that Terekhov provides significant improvements on all previous annotations, including those of Kasparov.

A spot-check of Terekhov's treatment of the opening of the following game shows the strength of the author's synthetical method, and to a lesser extent its difficulties. In six densely-packed pages, Terekhov provides practically a manual for playing the Fantasy Variation with White.

**V.Smyslov-I.Kan**
Sverdlovsk 1943
*Caro-Kann Defence*

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 f3**

Smyslov's use of this tension-raising move has recently attracted attention: Bezgodov's *The Extreme Caro-Kann* (2014), which recommends it for White, features a photo of our hero.

**3...e6 4 ♗e3 dxe4 5 ♘d2 exf3 6 ♘gxf3 ♘f6 7 ♘c4**

Terekhov prefers 7 ♗d3, citing a further inspirational game.

**7...♘bd7**

Rather than allow the grip Smyslov achieved in this game and another given by Terekhov, Black should strike back with 7...b5! 8 ♘ce5 ♘d5! 9 ♗d2 f6!.

His thematic comment is spot on: "securing the position of the d5-knight and controlling the e5- and g5-squares are the keys to this position." However, Terekhov makes the strange claim that 7...b5 has never been played. Johnsen and Hansen's new repertoire book *Win with the Caro-Kann* instead quotes the game McCollum-Therrien, USA 1998, which continued 8 ♘ce5 ♘d5 9 ♗d2 f6 10 ♘d3 ♗d6 11 g3 0-0 12 ♗g2 ♕b6 and White's compensation was inadequate, a conclusion Terekhov effectively agrees with.

Terekhov prefers 10 c4, devoting a paragraph to prove that 10...fxe5 11 cxd5 exd5 12 ♗xb5!! is playable for White, but as he admits, 10...bxc4 is simple and favours Black. So can we consider the 7 ♘c4 line refuted? Probably, but the further sacrifice 10 ♗d3!? fxe5 11 0-0 looks a dangerous practical try, since Black lags in development and his king has no safe home.

**8 ♗d3 ♘d5**

8...b5 is still better, as Terekhov says, but he doesn't mention 8...c5, on which Bezgodov focuses. In view of the next note, 8...♘d5 seems to me not to deserve Terekhov's '?!'.

**9 ♗g5!?**

**9...♕c7**

Again Terekhov perhaps harshly calls this move dubious. He analyses 9...♗e7 10 ♘d6+ in depth, correcting notes by Reuben Fine in the process, but since 9...f6 is better, was that necessary?

**10 0-0 h6?**

This is the real culprit, weakening Black's kingside; either 10... f6 or 10...b5 was still OK.

**11 ♗d2 ♗e7 12 ♘ce5 ♘5f6?**

12...0-0 13 ♕e1 was also unappetising, but Black's best was 12...♘xe5 13 ♘xe5 0-0 14 ♕h5 f5 15 ♗xh6 ♗f6 according to Terekhov, who picks holes in Fine's analysis.

**13 ♕e1 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 ♗d7 15 ♕g3 g5? 16 ♕h3! ♖f8 17 ♘xf7?!**

Spectacular, but 17 ♕xh6 wins much more simply: Terekhov speculates that this may be why Smyslov omitted the game from his books.

**17...♖xf7 18 ♗g6 ♕d6 19 ♔h1 0-0-0 20 ♗xf7 e5 21 ♕xh6**

And Smyslov eventually converted his material advantage. Terekhov's analysis of this game could have been a bit more concise and I've questioned a couple of his emphases, but this is still impressive work.

Is anything left out of this comprehensive book? Understandably in a chess biography, Terekhov does not excavate the more troubling aspects of the political context that would have affected Smyslov. In *Smyslov on the Couch* (Elk & Ruby, 2018, pp. 32-33), Genna Sosonko recounts that in the 1970s he gave Smyslov a copy of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*. Smyslov responded gloomily: "Solzhenitsyn was spot on, spot on. My father graduated from the Saint Petersburg Institute of Technology too, before the revolution. Many of his university classmates were arrested in Moscow and Petersburg. He tried to protect me from all of that [...] but I figured something was up". Still, perhaps we'll learn more about this in due course, since further volumes of Terekhov's work are happily still to come. This is chess history at its best.

*James Vigus*

**U Cannot Be Serious –**
**Avant-Garde Strategy in Chess**
Gerard Welling & Michael Basman, 304 pages
Thinkers Publishing
RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

International Master Mike Basman is a unique character in the world of chess. From his early promise, which saw him as a serious candidate to become Britain's first grandmaster, through his switch to highly eccentric openings, such as the Grob (1 g4), his years spent making the UK Chess Challenge the world's largest chess tournament and the endgame featuring the infamous £300,000 VAT bill, it has been quite a story. This made the current book one of the most anticipated of the year, but unfortunately it is flawed and disappointing.

Where to start? The title. Why the truncated version of 'you'? Why bother using a clichéd phrase stemming from John McEnroe, which instantly undermines one of the main selling points of the book – Mike's originality? The very first line of the introduction stumbles badly too: "Modern chess is getting to be more and more a young man's game." In the current climate, this offers a shade too much of a block upon which people will stumble.

According to the blurb: "This book is written with the intention to introduce the reader to the creative chess ideas of Michael Basman. He gave up more intense regular tournament chess around the turn of the millennium, to concentrate his energy on the development of school chess."

Co-author Gerard Welling played in two tournaments with Mike – the Biel Masters in 1979 and the Liege Open in 1981 – and the pair discussed Mike's unusual ideas on depth. "We discussed the ideas which has given me a clearer idea of the man's way of chess thinking than before – because the multiple outright rejections in the past and on the net are clear proof that it is not so easy to understand new and creative ideas."

Yes, we do get to see Mike's remarkable ideas in action, the most interesting of which are the ones from recent years, because Mike's earlier efforts have already been covered in his own books. The games are entertaining, of course – and it always comes as something as a surprise when we encounter a 'normal' tactical device in Mike's games.

**S.Edwards-M.Basman**
Atkins Open, Coventry 2015

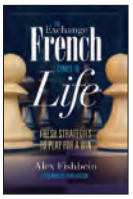
**22...♗xh2+!** (and 0-1, 25).

Yet a book about Basman needs to give so much more. To some chess players he is an unsung hero; an underground warrior, flying the flag for the common man. Others see him as a harmless eccentric, not to be taken seriously. The story needs to be told properly. I wanted to read more about the mercurial man behind the ideas, complete with the triumphs, the disasters, the outrageous moments – and the embarrassing ones, too. Unfortunately, I was left with very little of an impression of the man himself.

There are editorial flaws too, not least the mistaken belief that Mike's middle name is James, when it is actually John. The first name I saw in the index had the wrong initial, which is at odds with the correct version given in the book.

It is unfortunate, but this book represents a missed opportunity. Michael John Basman's story is still waiting to be told.

*Sean Marsh*




**The Exchange French Comes to Life***
Alex Fishbein, 240 pages
Russell Enterprises

*[* – We are experiencing delays receiving some titles from Russell Enterprises. Please check on the Chess & Bridge website or with the shop to see when this book will be in stock.]*

When a player sits down at the chess board, armed to the teeth with the sharpest variations of the French Winawer (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4), the very least welcome sight is undoubtedly 3 exd5, the dreaded Exchange Variation. It is, without doubt, the most annoying exchange variation arising from *any* chess opening. A decent player with white can usually hold a stronger opponent to a dull draw.

In this new work subtitled 'Fresh Strategies to Play for a Win', Alex Fishbein hopes to take things a step further by bringing the variation to life. Is it really possible to promote the Exchange Variation as a worthwhile option for White? I was intrigued to see if there were new developments to help it on its way.

In his thoughtful forward, John Watson, a renowned expert on the French Defence, comments that "I suspect that most readers of this book will be pleasantly surprised to find out how rich the play can become in the French Exchange Variation. That alone is enough to reward a careful reading, and Fishbein's careful exposition of lines and strategies will undoubtedly translate into extra points over the board." Watson's own books on the French Defence (*Play the French*, 4th edition, Everyman Chess, 2012, being the most recent) are essential reading and his opinion on the subject is valuable.

The first chapter introduces key ideas and concepts via seven illustrative games, showing how the opening has developed over the years.

The first game shows Chigorin in action against Alapin, back in 1906. The seventh game features Carlsen in an online game against Meier. With Kasparov also in the mix – beating Korchnoi at Tilburg, 1991 – it is clear the Exchange Variation has a rather more interesting history than one would have imagined.

The introductory chapter did its job; it drew me in. It also set the tone for the rest of the book, which utilises explanatory prose rather than offering confusing thickets of variations. The next eight chapters analyse the variations lines and deviations after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5. These include attempts by both sides to change the symmetrical structure in the most natural way: c2-c4 for White;....c7-c5 for Black.

Particular attention is paid to the resulting pawn structures. This is particularly important when it comes to the isolated queen's pawn positions and Fishbein explains various nuances which are easy to miss. Kasparov's famous pair of games – against Korchnoi and Short – still deserve attention. The new idea came after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 4 ♘f3 ♗g4 5 h3 ♗h5 and now, instead of the passive 6 ♗e2?! with which Gurevich played against Short in the last round of the 1990 Manilla Interzonal, there is major improvement in 6 ♕e2+!.

This was Gurevich's own improvement. He worked for Kasparov at the time, which makes it easier to understand why the 13th world champion adopted the variation. The point is that the obvious 6...♗e7 loses a pawn to 7 ♕b5+ and 6...♕e7 7 ♗e3! ensures White will not only keep the queens on the board, but will also be able to castle queenside very quickly.

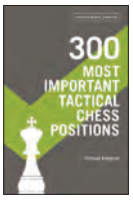
Aggressive players can overreact with Black. The aforementioned Kasparov-Korchnoi encounter left the latter fuming: "How could I lose against this drawn variation? And how could the world champion play this drawing line?"

There is also a chapter on 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 exd5, which is dubbed 'The Delayed Exchange Variation'. Fishbein admits he is "not a huge devotee of this variation", but nevertheless presents "some interesting and hidden ideas". It could be a useful surprise weapon against Winawer fans.

The final chapter, titled Your Repertoire File, is of particular interest. According to the author: "This book introduces a new way (at least, one I haven't seen in print) of constructing your repertoire. The final chapter, Chapter 11, contains the precise variations and move orders that I advise players to remember. Of course, exactly how much you remember will be a function of your skill, memory, and other factors. But Chapter 11 contains, in one place and a concise form, all the specific moves that it makes sense to know." It acts as turbocharged, extended index to the book, enabling the reader to understand and remember the main ideas and transpositions.

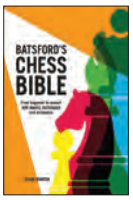
This is a fine effort which is sure to change opinions on the Exchange Variation. Indeed, when I started this month's reviews, I never imagined a book on this variation would prove to be more interesting and satisfying than a book all about Mike Basman.

*Sean Marsh*




**300 Most Important Tactical Chess Positions**
Thomas Engqvist, 288 pages, paperback
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

It's good to see that Batsford are maintaining their rich chess tradition and any work by the creative and lucid Thomas Engqvist has to be of interest. Aiming squarely at the club player, the Swedish Grandmaster wants not just to improve a basic grasp of tactics, but explains how to calculate better and even how to whip up an attack seemingly of out of thin air à la Mikhail Tal. Simply studying one or two of Engqvist's positions a day should quickly pay off for many readers.



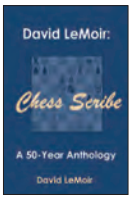

**Batsford's Chess Bible**
Sean Marsh, 208 pages, hardback
RRP £14.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £13.49**

Sean is not only kept busy with reviewing duties, but continues to play a pivotal role for CSC and also these days writes the Chessable blog. Somehow he's still found time to see a new version of his introductory work for Batsford appear. Subtitled 'From beginner to winner, with moves techniques and strategies', the book begins by paying tribute to Bob Wade's classic *Playing Chess* (Batsford, 1974), before introducing the pieces and moves ahead of some basic tactical and positional motifs. As well as covering a few classic openings and games, Sean most certainly doesn't neglect the rich history of the royal game, with readers likely to come away having not just fully grasped the basics of chess, but also developed a strong interest in its characters and complexities.

Batsford have also reprinted *Chess: The Art of Logical Thinking* (256 pages, paperback), in which Neil McDonald analyses 30 top-level games with the aim of improving the reader's ability to plan. Now back in stock at Chess & Bridge, *Chess: The Art of Logical Thinking* is available for just £14.99 or £13.49 for Subscribers.

**Checkmate: TV Season Two**
Anna Richardson & Simon Williams (hosts),
DVD, running time: 4 hours
RRP £24.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.49**

At long last the second series of *Checkmate* is out, most professionally produced by Alan Byron's Screenbound production company. Over nine episodes, an intriguing mix of players, including Nigel Short, Mariya Muzychuk and Richard Rapport battle it out for the £20,000 first prize, with Richardson interviewing them after each game, while Simon Williams presents the best bits of the chess action.




**Chess Scribe: A 50-Year Anthology**
David LeMoir, 268 pages, paperback
RRP £15.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £14.39**

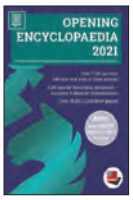
*Chess Scribe* is an entertaining read, as well as one which will surely indirectly improve readers' tactical and attacking play. Those are two areas in which David LeMoir has always excelled at the chess board, and here he presents a collection of his favourite annotations and articles, spanning half a century. See pp. 36-37 for more details.

**Greatest 440 Puzzles**
Csaba Balogh, 216 pages, paperback
RRP £18.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.09**

Chess Evolution do like their puzzle books with Balogh's latest collection subtitled 'The Best Online Tactics of 2020'. Readers will likely want to progress from the 'Easy' to the 'Medium' to the 'Hard' chapters, with full solutions given to each position and pretty much every standard type of sacrifice appearing at least once.

Also just out from Chess Evolution is Efstratios Grivas's *Grivas Opening Laboratory Volume 6* (RRP £23.95; Subscribers –

£21.55), in which the Greek GM continues to map out his detailed 1 d4 and 2 c4 repertoire for White, here tackling the main lines of the QGD, as well as the Semi-Slav.




**Opening Encyclopaedia 2021**
ChessBase PC-DVD
RRP £89.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £80.95**

The *Opening Encyclopaedia* contains all of the theoretical articles and surveys from each issue of *ChessBase Magazine*. On this easy-to-navigate DVD, users will find almost 8,500 of them, as well as all the games featured in each. There's undoubtedly a survey if not many on just about every minor variation and these days the *Encyclopaedia* also contains some 22 hours of video footage. Those who like their theory and/or to peruse opening analysis should note that it's also possible to upgrade from *Opening Encyclopaedia 2020* for £64.95 (£58.45 for Subscribers and do make sure that you know the serial number when ordering from Chess & Bridge).

Also just out is *ChessBase Magazine 201* (RRP £17.99; Subscribers – £16.19), which looks at Anish Giri's victory in the Magnus Carlsen Invitational and also pays tribute to Vassily Ivanchuk. Mihail Marin's strategy column takes the viewer back to the super-strong 1991 Linares tournament, while on top of all the usual features and opening surveys, a number of new ideas for White are presented in the Belgrade Gambit, 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 d4 exd4 5 ♘d5!?.

**Play the Budapest Gambit**
Andrew Martin, 384 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99? **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99?**

This is arguably Andrew Martin's best work to date. The popular coach and presenter gives a real cri de cœur as to why 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e5 is an excellent choice at club level. Martin accepts that grandmasters should only use the opening as a surprise weapon, and is not afraid to admit when White is better, but believes that matters are far from easy in White in practice, whether Black follows up with 3 dxe5 ♘g4 or even the Fajarowicz Gambit, 3...♘e4!?. All the key ideas for both sides are mapped out and more before Martin tackles the theory in some detail, including some fascinating new ideas.

**Puzzle Quest 2020**
Ivan Ivanisevic, 304 pages, hardback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

This training work features over 500 positions for readers to solve with the Serbian Grandmaster hoping not only to make solvers sharper, but especially to improve their evaluation skills. The positions are given chronologically, but categorised for difficulty on a 1-5 scale and while some do feature a stunning sacrifice, others require the right strategic path to be found.

**The Flexible Open Spanish**
Sipke Ernst; PC-DVD, running time: 6 hours
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

Dutch Grandmaster Sipke Ernst presents a repertoire with his beloved 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♘xe4 for ChessBase. Carlsen and especially Mamedyarov played this way as Black in the recent Magnus Carlsen Invitational. The forcing nature of the Open Lopez makes ideal for helping to neutralise higher-rated opponents, although Ernst is also at pains to point out that it's also a good choice for outplaying lower-rated ones. He usefully maps out too a mini-repertoire for Black lest White ducks the Open variation with 5 d3 or the Exchange Lopez.

**The Grünfeld Formula**
Andrew Martin; PC-DVD,
running time: 6 hours
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

What is the Grünfeld formula? It is based on Viktor Korchnoi's advice that you could do far worse than "Play Grünfeld against everything apart from 1 e4". As such, Martin looks at Black setting up with 1...♘f6, 2...g6 and aiming for ...d5, even when White doesn't play 1 d4 and 2 c4. In short, he shows how such an approach can work well against the London, Torre and even the Trompowsky, while also mapping out a repertoire for Black against White's first-move alternatives to 1 d4 and 1 e4, including even advocating 1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 e5!?.

**The Modernized Italian Game for White**
Alexander Kalinin & Nikolai Kalinichenko,
384 pages, paperback
RRP £30.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £27.85**

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 has arguably been *the* opening of the past half decade or so, and White is continuing to pose questions with the Giuoco Piano. In this work for Thinkers Publishing, the Russian authors tackle all the most common plans and positional motifs for both sides, which will make the reader fully aware of the importance of White's light-squared bishop, while also learning how to, for instance, deal with a black knight bound for f4. The choice of examples is generally excellent, with the authors relying heavily on verbal explanation ahead of finishing the work by mapping out a fairly detailed repertoire for White.

**The Queen's Gambit – Accepted!**
Jonathan Arnott & Rosie Irwin,
224 pages, paperback
RRP £12.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.69**

This is not a work about 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4, but rather a pretty decent read and a book which would make a nice present for any friends or relatives looking to learn a little more about chess. Rosie Irwin was inspired to do just that after being captivated by Netflix's *The Queen's Gambit*. Like Beth Harmon, Rosie, who is featured on page 25 of this issue, has had her own demons, but also rapidly developed a love of the game. Here we see how an adult who only knows how to move the pieces might progress from 300 or so to a pretty healthy 1300 rating, as Rosie has done. As we follow Rosie's story, her coach, Jonathan Arnott, explains the most important things which he taught her, be it the value of king safety or how to know when to launch an attack.

***Play Chess From the Comfort of Your Own Home!***

**National Correspondence Chess Club**

*Our philosophy: "To foster friendship between members"*

**For Beginners to Grandmasters**
**A wide variety of tournaments**
**FREE web server chess**
**FREE bi-monthly magazine**

For application form and full details visit our website:
**www.natcor.org.uk**

Contact: Des Green,
93 Eldmon Lane, Birmingham, B37 7DN
or email: treasurer@natcor.org.uk

# Saunders on Chess

**Follow me on Twitter: @johnchess or email: johns@chess.co.uk**

This month I'm having another look at Lastrounditis – the chess pandemic for which a vaccination is not yet available. Of course, regular readers will know that we've considered the phenomenon of last round chess before; for example, in my column of September 2019 which ended with the bold assertion that "players who strain to 'go for it' in last-round games are rather less likely to succeed than those who stick to their normal game plan."

I was reminded of this when looking at some games from the 1962 Derby Easter Premier which I recently posted on BritBase. This was a six-round Swiss tournament with only eight players, hence only one round short of an all-play-all (which sounds like a jocular euphemism referring to someone's mental health). In the final round, two of the eight players, 1954 British Champion Alan Phillips and regular 1960s Championship competitor Norman Stephenson both had Black, but were obviously determined to 'go for it'. Sadly they overdid it: in both cases the operation was successful but the impatient died.

This chess virus has mutated into various different strains. One of the commonest is *Lastrounditis Lassitudinis*, where the chessboard disaster results from the fact that a player is simply exhausted at the end of a long tournament. Or even a short one, as in this case. Shoehorning six games into four days is enough to bring on symptoms, and I think this may have been the case with Phillips here. The report published in *CHESS* at the time (May 1962, p.241, Vol.27, no.408-9) reported that he had lacked recent practice, so maybe the strain told on him.

**R.Scowen-A.Phillips**
Derby Premier 1962

White, in last place with only half a point to his name, is trying to grovel his way to a draw, having opened with an ultra-stodgy Giuoco Piano. Alan Phillips has done his best to make headway with Black by opening the f-file and putting pressure on f2.

**23 ♕e1 ♕g5 24 ♕d2**

A tacit offer of a draw.

**24...♗e3**

"No, thanks. I'm playing for a win."

**25 ♕e1**

"Fair enough. I'll carry on grovelling, then."

**25...♖g6??**

Lastrounditis strikes. "Mate in one – always good!" as genial GM Ivan Sokolov likes to say when commentating, but not when the reply **26 fxe3** captures a bishop and also defends the mate threat. Phillips played on for another 20 odd moves, but in vain.

Not very edifying, that one; just a horrible oversight on Phillips' part. The following game, played in that same fateful last round, is much more entertaining, having more twists and turns than a twisty, turny thing. It was published in the same issue of *CHESS* referred to above. The annotator was uncredited, but I think it might have been Owen Hindle. The notes stand up very well to analysis engine review and I've left them unedited.

This second game is a more even contest than Scowen-Phillips where the disparity in playing strength was very large (Roger Scowen's grade was 5b – 169-176 – compared to Phillips' most recent grade of 2a – 225-232). Cliff Hilton was grade 3a (209-216) to Norman Stephenson's 4a (193-200) at the time, so Black was out-graded, though not by a huge amount. The first 28 moves are cagey, but it's a case of life begins at (move) 40. Complexity leads to time trouble leads to disaster. One cannot help feeling sorry for Norman, as he misses his chance to crown a fine game with ...♘f5 at the right moment, but the notes give us a clue as to what happened – a case of *Lastrounditis Hallucinatus* as Norman visualises a rook that wasn't there.

**C.Hilton-F.N.Stephenson**
Derby Premier 1962

Although desperately short of time, Stephenson has set a cunning trap with 38...♕b7-b8!; if 39 ♘f3 then 39...♘xg4! favours Black.

**39 ♗a3 ♘g8 40 f5?**

This gives Black the opportunity he was hoping for when playing 38...♕b8. Quiet preparation for f5 by, for example, 40 ♔g1, was indicated.

**40...gxf5 41 gxf5 ♘xe5! 42 dxe5 ♖xh2+! 43 ♔xh2 ♕xe5+ 44 ♖f4 ♕xe3 45 ♖g4 ♘h6 46 ♖g3 ♕e5 47 ♗xe7 ♔xe7**

A promising alternative was 47...♘xf5 48 ♖xf5 exf5 49 ♗c5 ♖g6 50 ♗f2 ♖xg3 51 ♗xg3 f4 52 ♗f2 f3+!, etc. Black had only a few seconds to reach the second time control after 50 moves.

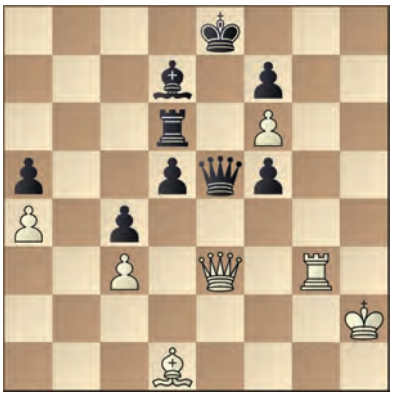
**48 ♕a3+ ♔e8 49 f6 ♖d6?**

White was threatening mate at e7 and 49...♕d6 was no good for Black because of 50 ♕xd6 ♖xd6 51 ♖h3, etc. But the obvious 49...♘f5! 50 ♖xf5 exf5 would have given Black good winning prospects. Stephenson saw this line, but still imagined that White had a rook at f1 and could play 51 ♖e1! ♕xe1 52 ♖g8 mate.

**50 ♕c1! ♘f5**

Or 50...♘g8 51 ♖e1!.

**51 ♖xf5! exf5 52 ♕e3! 1-0**

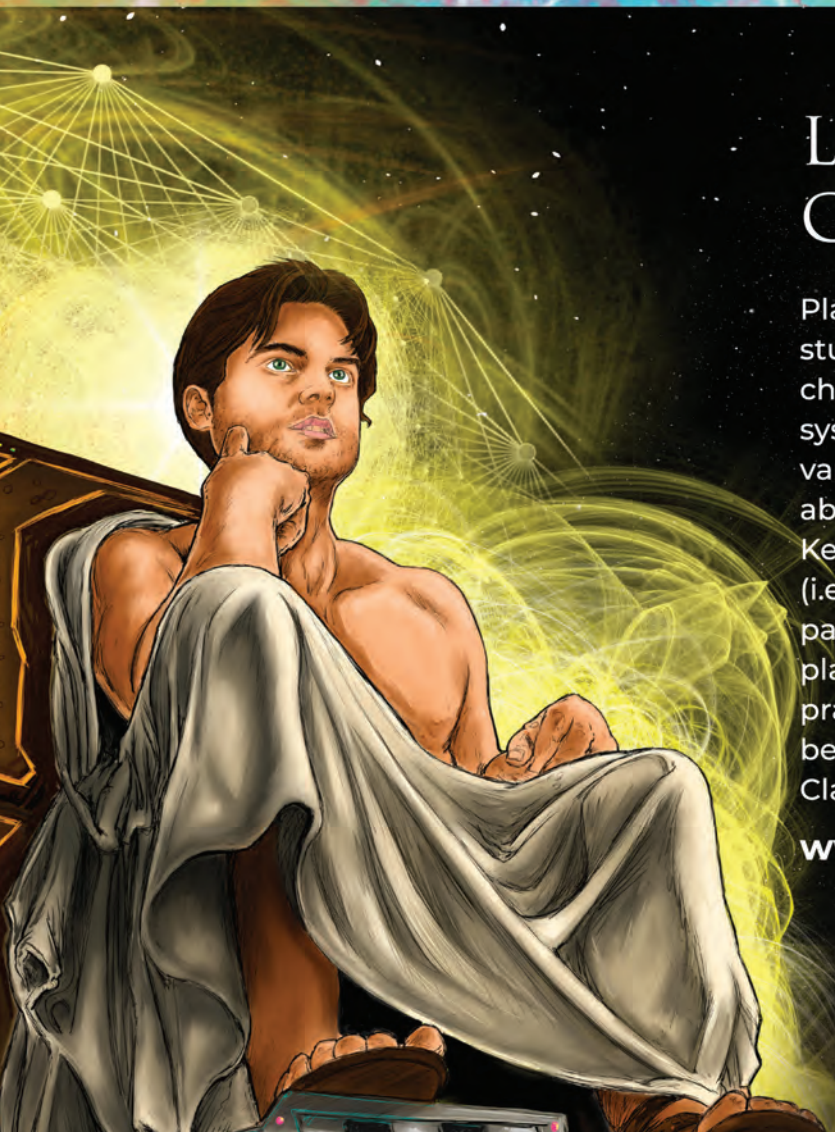


I confess that when I first looked at the final position, it took a fair few moments before the penny dropped. My senescent brain failed to register that, after 52...♕xe3, not the knee-jerk recapture on e3, but 53 ♖g8 mate. Not Lastrounditis in my case, some other chessboard infirmity which I have yet to investigate... hmm... recapturitis?

# Lifetime Repertoires: King's Indian Attack

FIDE Master **Kamil Plichta**'s practical repertoires have enabled thousands of people to sharpen their opening play. In this new repertoire, he turns the favorite weapon of world champion Bobby Fischer and five-time US champion Hikaru Nakamura into a versatile system you can play and WIN with for the rest of your life starting with the flexible 1. Nf3.

**www.chessable.com/lifetime-kia**



# Lifetime Repertoires: Classical Sicilian

Play fearlessly against 1.e4 without having to study heaps of opening theory. 2018 US champion **Sam Shankland** offers this complete system versus 1.e4, with the Classical Sicilian variation at its core. You won't have to worry about Poisoned Pawn, Adams, English, and Keres Attacks. All of which make other Sicilians (i.e. Najdorf, Sveshnikov, Scheveningen) particularly difficult to master for busy club players. Sam's high-quality instruction and practical approach are the reason he's so beloved with his students. Take up the Classical Sicilian today!

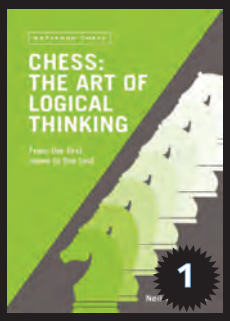
**www.chessable.com/classical-sicilian**

chessable

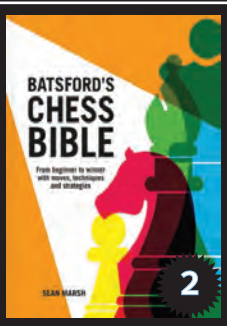
# Subscribers Only June

**Order online*: www.chess.co.uk/shop - Call 020 7486 7015 - Or use the included carrier sheet**

** Enter SUBSCRIBER in the 'Coupon Code' box to claim the subscriber discount when ordering online.*



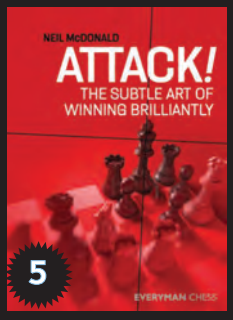

**1: Chess: The Art of Logical Thinking**
*Neil McDonald, 256 pages, paperback*
RRP £14.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £13.49**



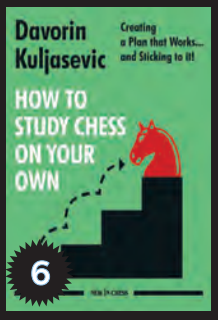

**2: Batsford's Chess Bible**
*Sean Marsh, 208 pages, hardback*
RRP £14.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £13.49**

**3: 300 Most Important Tactical Chess Positions**
*Thomas Engqvist, 288 pages, paperback*
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

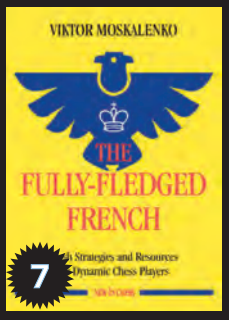
**4: Greatest 440 Puzzles: The Best Online Tactics of 2020** *Csaba Balogh, 216 pages, paperback*
RRP £18.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.09**




**5: Attack! *The Subtle Art of Winning Brilliantly***
*Neil McDonald, 368 pages, paperback*
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**



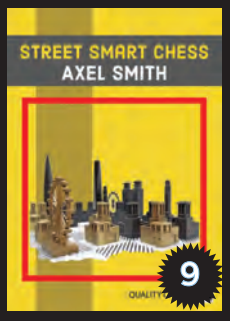

**6: How to Study Chess on Your Own**
*Davorin Kuljasevic, 380 pages, paperback*
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**



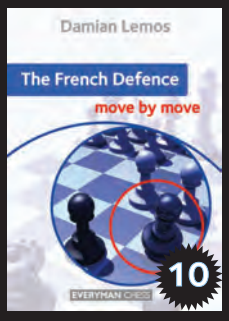

**7: The Fully-Fledged French**
*Viktor Moskalenko, 368 pages, paperback*
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

**8: Chess Scribe: A 50-Year Anthology**
*David LeMoir, 268 pages, paperback*
RRP £15.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £14.39**

## ALL ITEMS ARE POST FREE FOR UK CUSTOMERS




**9: Street Smart Chess**
*Axel Smith, 248 pages, hardback*
RRP £26.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.29**




**10: The French Defence: Move by Move**
*Damian Lemos, 352 pages, paperback*
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

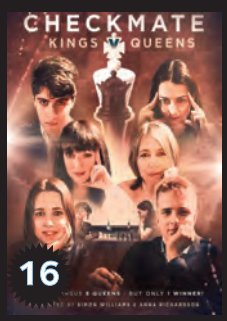
**11: U Cannot Be Serious: Avant-Garde Strategy in Chess** *Michael Basman & Gerard Welling, 304 pages, paperback* RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

**12:The Modernized Italian Game for White**
*Alexander Kalinin & Nikolai Kalinichenko, 384 pages, paperback* RRP £30.95 **SUBS' £27.85**

**13: Puzzle Quest 2020**
*Ivan Ivanisevic, 304 pages, hardback*
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

**14: The Queen's Gambit - Accepted!**
*Jonathan Arnott & Rosie Irwin, 224 pages, paperback*
RRP £12.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.69**

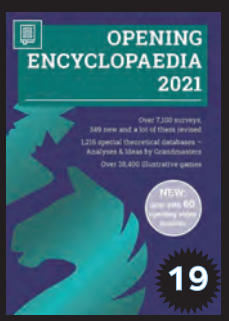
**15: Play the Budapest Gambit**
*Andrew Martin, 384 pages, paperback*
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**




**16: Checkmate: Season Two (DVD)** *Hosted by Anna Richardson & Simon Williams, running time: 3 hrs 54 mins*
RRP £24.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.49**

**17: The Grünfeld Formula (PC-DVD)**
*Andrew Martin, running time: 6 hours*
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

**18: The Flexible Open Spanish (PC-DVD)**
*Sipke Ernst, running time: 4 hours*
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**




**19: Opening Encyclopaedia 2021 (PC-DVD)**
*The most in-depth resource available for studying the openings*
RRP £89.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £80.95**

**20: Fat Fritz 2.0 SE (PC-DVD)**
*The latest word in chess analysis and sparring partner*
RRP £89.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £80.95**

ONLY subscribers to CHESS MAGAZINE may order items at the prices and conditions shown on this page.
All offers expire 30/6/2021. These offers are POST FREE in the UK only. Please add 20%
(of the undiscounted price) for EU countries and 30% (of the undiscounted price) Rest of the World.